

# **Serious Play: exploring the ethical tensions of license and limits in Drama, Theatre and Performance Education**

**LANON CARL PRIGGE**

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Promoter: Prof. Petrus du Preez  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences



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## ABSTRACT

Broad global trends evidence the need for improving ethics in a variety of disciplines. The general education codes do not address the unique culture specific to teaching and learning drama, theatre and performance in tertiary institutions in South Africa. Interrogating ethics could be met with resistance and upset the status quo in education and industry.

Imposing ethical frameworks from the outside-in may fail to account for the specific culture they are designed to serve. This study observes that ‘outside-in’ refers to interference from the greater systems of education (social and institutional), as well as any mandated prescriptions or strongly divergent value positions arising from within an individual educator’s own context. This study therefore explores how educators might begin the process of negotiating ethics within their personal pedagogy by assuming personal accountability. This foregrounds the value of a *process* and *practice of ethical self enquiry* over the general identification and analysis of ethical considerations. It explores personal preparatory process work ahead of anticipated negotiation of ethical value positions and concerns in group dialogue.

Because narrative is central to drama and theatre and performance, this study explores and reflects on personal narrative-oriented enquiry as a means to conscientising personal ethical value positions (and evolving a ‘personal ethos’). The emphasis resides on raising personal consciousness by exploring personal *resources* in answer to the discussion of ethics. By personal *resources* is indicated: self-motivated effort (autonomous moral agency), conscious and unconscious (tacit) historical experience and knowledge, as well as the creative talents, practices and techniques unique to their artistry and pedagogy. Also explored and reflected upon is how a raising of personal consciousness in this manner might furthermore contribute to a raising of collective consciousness.

The study is presented as an autoethnographic enquiry, or *Performed Narrative*, that describes, examines, demonstrates and *performs* a process and practice of ethical self enquiry as an evocation to fellow educators. This study finds that the quest for identity and self-knowledge are shared by the three strands this *Performed Narrative* draws together, namely: *performance*, *education* and *ethics*. It proposes that if the quest for self-knowledge can somehow be foregrounded in performance and its education as an inherently *ethical* endeavour, it may be possible for ethical self enquiry - as a form of autonomous moral agency – to become desirable as integral to drama, theatre and performance education versus being an imposition from the outside. It suggests that this might result in a ‘paradigm shift’ that addresses ethical concerns at the level of causes rather than effects.

## OPSOMMING

Brëë, globale tendense dui die nood aan dat etiese aspekte in verskeie dissiplines verbeter moet word. Algemene opleidingskodes spreek nie die unieke probleme van opleiding in drama, teater en performance op tersiêre vlak in Suid-Afrika aan nie. As die etiese kodes ondersoek word, kan dit verzet en weerstand veroorsaak en die status quo van die opvoedkundige sisteme en die industrie ontwig. Verskeie faksies kan so gevorm word.

As etiese raamwerke van buite af op 'n spesifieke kultuur afgeforseer word, kan dit wees dat daardie raamwerk nie die spesifieke kultuur genoegsaam in ag neem nie. Hierdie studie stel dat die 'buite-na binne' benadering nie net inmenging van 'n groter opvoedkundige sisteem of 'n spesifieke instansie impliseer nie, maar die benadering dui ook op die voorskrifte en verskillende waardeposisies wat die verskillende kontekste waarin die individu homself bevind, aandui.

Hierdie studie verken hoe opvoeders 'n proses van etiese ondersoek van hul persoonlike pedagogie kan onderneem, deur persoonlike verantwoordelikheid te aanvaar. Dit fokus die waarde op 'n *proses* en die *praktyk* van etiese selfondersoek bo die algemene identifikasie en analise van etiese oorwegings. Die studie verken persoonlike voorbereidingsproseswerk voordat die geantisipeerde onderhandelinge van etiese waardeposisies en besorgdhede in groepsdialoog kan plaasvind.

Narratief speel 'n sentrale rol in drama, teater en *performance* en daarom verken, ondersoek en reflekteer hierdie studie die persoonlike narratiewe ondersoek as 'n metode tot 'n bewusmaking van 'n persoonlike etiese waardeposisionering ('n persoonlike etos). Die klem lê op die proses van persoonlike bewuswording deur verskillende persoonlike hulpbronne te verken om sodoende antwoorde in die etiese gesprek te kry. Met die persoonlike hulpbronne word daar verwys na: selfgemotiveerde inspanning (outonome, morele handelinge), bewustelike en onbewustelike (versweë) geskiedkundige ervarings en kennis, sowel as kreatiewe talente, praktyke en tegnieke wat uniek is aan die kuns en pedagogie van drama en teater. Daar word ook gekyk na en gereflekteer op hoe die bewuswording van 'n persoonlike bewussyn deur middel van hierdie metodes kan bydra tot 'n verhoogde, kollektiewe bewustheid.

Hierdie studie word as 'n *Performed Narratief* aangebied, 'n outo-etnografiese ondersoek wat beskryf, ondersoek, demonstreer en 'n proses van praktiese etiese selfondersoek *perform* om as oproeping vir ander opvoeders in die veld te dien. Hierdie studie bevind dat die soeke na 'n identiteit en selfkennis gedeel word met die drie verskillende strome wat hierdie *Performed Narratief* saamtrek, naamlik *performance*, *opleiding* en die *etiek*. Die studie stel dat as die strewe na selfkennis op 'n manier as 'n inherente etiese onderneming in performance en performance-opleiding vooropgestel word, en sodoende kan dit moontlik wees dat etiese selfondersoek – as 'n vorm van outonome morele handeling

– deel vorm van drama, teater en performance opleiding word, in plaas daarvan dat dit deur 'n eksterne sisteem voorgeskryf word. Die studie bevind dat dit 'n paradigmaskuif kan veroorsaak wat die etiese kwessies aanspreek ten opsigte van die oorsaak daarvan, eerder as die gevolg.

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## CHAPTER ONE: Briefing

### 1.1 Going fishing for three converging strands: *performance, education and ethics*

It is difficult to determine exactly when this narrative truly begins, because even while this exposition may appear to begin when I initiated the formal research process for this study, the narrative of ethics in performance and its education is irrevocably intertwined with who I am and where I have been. It has grown with, and emerged from me. In part this may be because ethics and identity co-evolve and may be considered inseparable. Or more to the point, as personality and social psychologist Svend Brinkman asserts, without an orientation to moral values identity is impossible (2008: 411).

Equally I believe that what one chooses to study is not divisible from the self. Thus this *Performed Narrative*<sup>1</sup> was conceived when I was. As Denzin puts it:

The living body/subjective self of the researcher is recognized as a salient part of the research process, and sociohistorical implications of the researcher are reflected upon “to study the social world from the perspective of the interacting individual” (in Spry 2001: 711).

Sinner et al. suggest that, especially in arts based research, “there is no simple distinguishing between the researcher and the research. In effect, there is an organic and lively relationship where the researcher and the research are part of an intricate dance that is always evolving” (2006: 1242). In my own case, this lively relationship *has always been* evolving. The three converging and increasingly intersecting strands of *performance, education and ethics* have ever been old lovers and travel mates on my journey, even though it was only with the insights gained from engaging this study that I could truly notice this. They are all aspects of my identity. Yet investigating how your chosen profession might be ethically compromised is not quite the obvious choice for study, it is not something one would expect to deliberately decide to focus on when seeking to establish yourself in a career. It calls too much for playing Judas and his is not an enviable role to audition for. The difficulty of noticing the convergence of these three strands, and then finally paying attention to them as a *gestalt*, is also compounded by the complexity of lived experience. The relation between *performance, education and ethics* did not magically coalesce at eighteen years of age when I was deciding what courses to take up at university. I would have balked at many of the ideas explored in this narrative when I was a performer in training to be a ‘star’.

That said, questions surrounding ethics in performance training, education and industry are ones I have been carrying as constant companions since the inception of my own training over 20 years ago. I have

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<sup>1</sup> See Section 1.3 of this chapter for exposition regarding the positioning of this dissertation as a *Performed Narrative*.

remained acutely aware that certain training practices, and the manner and contexts, in which they are delivered, might easily be construed as ethically contentious. In response to this, I have increasingly challenged myself as a participant-observer in performance, directing, choreography, education and curriculum development in drama, theatre and performance at a number of institutions within the South African context, to interrogate the ethics of my own practice, as a means to ensure my own safety, as well as that of students, colleagues, peers and collaborators. The impulse to delve more deeply into the research field of ethics in performance training escalated as a consequence of my research for a Master in Arts degree (2010). In my thesis I argued for the possibility that a sincere exploration of many of the techniques presented by practitioners such as Jerzi Grotowski and Eugenio Barba (whose work form an integral part of curricula at South African tertiary institutions) could have deleterious life-long effects on the emotional and psychological wellbeing of performers in training (Prigge 2010: 174). I suggested that, when taken to the extreme, such processes may lead to a disconnection from self, culture and ‘reality’ and might even result in identity crises, existential crises, ontological crises, trauma or psychosis (Prigge 2010: 175).

The personal impulses motivating this study have not occurred in isolation or lacked influence from the greater systems surrounding me. The need to interrogate practices and generate ethical codes in performance education and industry is an international issue that has great significance in the current South African context marked by two key incidents: in 2013 sexual abuse by a Drama lecturer at a major South African University was exposed (Pearlie, *Times Live*: 3 March 2013); and there was a heated controversy regarding a Matric Drama final examination question (Nair and Louw, *Times Live*: 27 Nov 2013). These incidents were highlighted while I was preparing the proposal for this study, and they added fuel to an already smouldering fire.

## **1.2 Fishing season: general context, literary impulses and motivations**

Kretzschmar and Bentley (2013: 1), motivating their case for teaching Applied Ethics in business degrees at the University of South Africa, reference a broad trend that addresses the need for ethics education in a variety of disciplines, owing to the emergence of a global climate in which ethical concerns across a diversity of sectors including government, medicine, banking, labour and business are increasing. To this list might be added the specific context of education in drama, theatre and performance.

Based on preliminary research that I conducted, there exist no unique methods for developing and maintaining ethical codes within contexts of drama education and training at national or institutional level in South Africa. Communication with both the South African Guild for Actors (SAGA) (2/09/2013) and the Performing Arts Network of South Africa (PANSA) (4/09/2013) revealed that

neither organisation was at the time aware of a specific code governing performance training within the industry as a whole, nor of any existing codes that might speak to the psychological dangers of performance training or other significant ethical issues. There appears to be a tendency to rely on the ethical constitutions of broader codes, for example national humanitarian and/or general higher education codes (SACE 2000). These do not adequately address the unique culture specific to teaching and learning drama, theatre and performance in tertiary institutions.

The close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw an escalation in the call for more stringent ethical frameworks in the context of education as a whole (Luckowski 1997, Vongalis-Macrow 2007, van Nuland 2009, Alam 2010), including education at tertiary institution or higher education level (Cohen et al. 2005, Azcona et al. 2008, Kretzschmar and Bentley 2013). A diversity of emerging factors inviting a necessary re-appraisal of ethical frameworks and appropriate measures to safeguard diverse stakeholders have entered the arena of tertiary education in the last two decades<sup>2</sup>.

Since the late 1960's there has been a growing concern and response to the need for sound ethical guidelines within the acting and performance industry. An emerging body of research (Kaplan 1969, Rule 1973, Bloch et al. 1987, Dieckman 1991, Geer 1992, Seton 2004, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010) speaks to what Brandfonbrener (1992: 101) describes as the “psychological hazards” of certain practices performers may be exposed to in the embodiment of heightened states of vulnerability and enacting degrading stereotypes<sup>3</sup>.

The emergence of applicable research and resultant change in practice seem slow considering the gravity of the concerns. Speculative factors contributing to the sluggish advance in ethical considerations include: an implicit attitude of “live and let live” in the performance industry that prevents performing artists from coming forward with their experiences of trauma or abuse (Brandfonbrener 1992: 101); performer training being likened to initiation into a “secret society” (Seton 2010: 9); a concomitant counter-culture of performance training, where the toughness of the

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<sup>2</sup> Chang et al. (2005: 93), investigating the ethics of research into teaching at universities in Australia, suggest that “while changes in tertiary education in Australia and elsewhere are well documented: increasing student diversity; advancing technologies; global competition; and shifting relationships between institutions, government and private providers [...] the impacts of these changes on student learning and knowledge creation are not clear”. In the preamble of *The Bucharest Declaration on Ethical Values and Principles of Higher Education in the Europe Region* (UNESCO 2004), the traditional “idea of a university” is questioned owing to the fact that the number and types of universities in Europe have increased and have also taken on new and diverse responsibilities. “As a result, a new balance may have to be struck between the university as a public-service institution and as an entrepreneurial organization” (UNESCO 2004: 1). This, the preamble suggests, will have ethical implications. Many of these factors play an analogous role in the South African context.

<sup>3</sup> Communications expert William Starosta (in Geer 1992: 4), suggests that psychodrama techniques should in fact be “counter-indicated” and that “risks faced from emotions that are improperly debriefed may offset the possible gains of the technique, except in the hands of an extremely skilled and *ethical* practitioner”. Emphasis added.

trade calls for simply “getting over” resistances, implying a willingness to accept suffering as a necessary part of the preparation process (Seton 2004: 233).

Similar impediments exist in the general context of tertiary education. Cohen et al. (2005: 121) suggest that on the whole undergraduates do not have the necessary vocabulary, experience, conceptual capacity and practical reasoning to successfully navigate the complex and often ambiguous real life ethical challenges they face in class, the workplace or in their personal lives. They are still highly influenced by role models and peers and tend to avoid questioning or labelling contentious situations owing to academic and workplace related pressures to succeed “above all else” (Cohen et al. 2005: 121-122), often justifying inappropriate behaviour when it fits in with self-interest or the industry culture they are seeking to establish themselves in. When confronted with ethical discomfort expressed on the part of students in discipline-specific courses, faculty often avoid the situation, direct students to ethical experts, fall back on content areas or respond from personal ethical orientations (Cohen et al. 2005: 121-122). Clearly mechanisms are lacking, and are needed, to penetrate and deal with ethical concerns from both sides of the student/educator continuum.

To date the emphasis has been largely on the *what* of performance training: the deleterious effects of performance practices and the need for ‘stepping-out’ mechanisms to break from character, including ‘cool-down’ periods after and between productions and debriefing and counselling post-production in order to process heightened emotional states. In response to this, certain techniques such as *Alba Emoting* (Bloch 1987, Rix 2002) have emerged that might be deemed safer methods for achieving the same, or a similar, desired result. However, less emphasis has been placed on the *how* of training, or *education itself*. This concerns the manner in which educators and students engage with one another during the process of knowledge transfer. It is only in recent years that scholars have highlighted a lack of, and urgent need for, research at this level (Seton 2010: 5). In the context of performance specifically, Seton (2010: 9) describes the problem as “a continuum of formation and habituation”, where educators get locked in a perpetuating cycle of training and inculcating students in the manner and culture in which they themselves were trained.

It appears then that before change can eventuate, the culture itself and educators’ orientations to and within it - what Diamond et al. describe as the “organizational habitus”<sup>4</sup> (2004: 76) - must be questioned, confronted and revised. Such a process would necessarily involve identifying the ideational foundation of the culture, and the practices and language used to describe and reinforce it.

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<sup>4</sup> Diamond et al. (2004: 76) postulate that while ‘organizational habitus’ usually references class-based orientations, it may also describe the micropolitical context of any educational context; including the “dispositions”, “perceptions” and “appreciations” of educators and administrators. They describe this context as “a pervasive stream of beliefs, expectations and practices [...] a current that guides teacher expectations and sense of responsibility in a particular direction”. The day-to-day process of teaching and the conversations about evaluating students in this micropolitical context are viewed as “the waves of sentiment that accumulate and give direction to the stream of beliefs”.

It has been suggested that this kind of interrogation could be met with resistance because of its capacity to upset the status quo of the field of performance (Seton 2009: 51, 2010: 18). This may challenge its internal integrity and validity, and undermine its ‘license’ to fulfil its social function<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore Seton has observed that:

When I have expressed concern [...] to other acting teachers, many defended their peers’ actions with cautious ‘support’. These teachers assured me that what their peers were trying to do was to inculcate beneficial behaviours. It was claimed that this could only be achieved by ‘breaking through’ the resistance of students who desire to learn. Resistance by students was variously interpreted as hesitation through fear of failure, or fear of change, or just laziness (Seton 2007: 1-2).

The issue of loyalty or ‘keeping it in the family’ is central to ethics (Matousek 2011: 148): “[s]ince moral life requires solidarity, no one is more loathed than a traitor”. Investigating ethics may result in factions forming. Strategies are thus required to deal with frictions that may arise between those who have recognised the need for change and those who have not, those still functioning within “a continuum of formation and habituation” (Seton 2010: 9) and those who aspire to break free of it. Strategies may also be needed to deal with potential intimidation from those with forceful opinions on either side of this growing divide.

Matousek draws a vital correlation between the evolution of human ethics, language (2011: 80) and memes<sup>6</sup> (2011: 167), and thus the key role *narrative* plays in the process of defining and refining ethical decisions. In contexts of abuse, transformation and change are often onset by victims coming forward with their stories to ‘break the silence’ and raise awareness. Geer (1992: 13-14) suggests that assessing the true impact of performance techniques through “a controlled long-term study of the issues [...] would be logistically complex, expensive, and theoretically difficult”. Although I am in agreement with the necessity and relevance of such research I have observed that the real movement on the ground regarding the need to address ethics in performance and its education could be attributed to the fact that certain individuals have started coming forward with concerns and telling their stories about them.

An example of the impact the sharing of narratives might have can be found in Alice Brandfonbrener’s article *The Forgotten Patients* (1992) published in the *Medical Problems of Performing Artists Journal*. Her story details her exposure and reaction to the embodied experiences of performers in need of medical and psychological care and attention owing to the “psychological hazards” (1992:

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<sup>5</sup> The culture of Drama, Theatre and Performance, as part of the arts in general, serves society in a manner that has historically been privileged (licensed) to comment on the status quo, to provide a voice that offers alternative and often conflicting viewpoints and anti-social perspectives (Harrop 1992: 109).

<sup>6</sup> Matousek (2011: 163) describes memes as “info-bytes that help to form personal and group identity”. “While *genes* are the basis for organic evolution, memes form the units of *cultural* evolution” (2011: 162). Emphases in original.

101) of performance practices. And it was as a consequence of his experiences as a participant observer at various sites of actor training in Australia that inspired Mark Seton's discovery in his doctoral research (2004) that: "what literature and practices existed in the field of actor training that might offer some guidance for what I perceived were several areas of ethical concern" (2010: 6).

The power of using creative devices, such as autobiographical narratives, poems and photographs, to investigate significant social issues is one of the central underpinnings of Arts-based Research, where a "watchfulness" as participant observer (researcher) denotes the willingness to "peer beneath the surface of the familiar, the obvious, the orthodox in a rescruinizing (re-searching) of the world" (Barone and Eisner 2012: 16). Using diverse forms of narrative as a means to more deeply understand and 'make sense' of complex human issues is central to Narrative Research practices (Browning and Boudès 2005: 33, Squire in Andrews et al. 2013: 50). According to Squire (in Andrews et al. 2013: 48) the methodological validity of narrative-based research lies largely in the fact that it: "rests on a phenomenological assumption that experience can, through stories become part of consciousness". Arts-based educational researcher Pauline Sameshima claims that "shared stories encourage reflexive enquiries in ethical self-consciousness" (in Berridge 2007: 9). The validity and effectiveness of retrospectively returning to past experiences as a participant observer is also supported by Action Research, a methodology which is useful in the context of education and training. According to Perrett (2003: 2), "it can play a role in promoting reflection among teachers and teacher educators alike; and thus in promoting change in educational settings". Andrews et al. (2013: 17) suggest that "narratives exist within, transform and in turn are transformed by their location in the real world". Stories inspire, and seed more stories; and not only stories, but responses.

Narrative is central to Drama, and Theatre and Performance educators should be well versed in narrative techniques. As such a personal narrative-oriented enquiry may offer a viable means whereby the discussion of ethical concerns in drama, theatre and performance education could be approached. Furthermore personal narrative enquiry may offer strategies to defuse frictions that arise, as well as reduce the possibility of intimidation by various parties.

### **1.3     *A Performed Narrative of Ethical Self Enquiry that serves as a doctoral dissertation***

The autoethnographic narrative I will share in the pages to come describes, examines, demonstrates and *performs* a process and practice of ethical self enquiry I undertook between August 2013 and August 2015 as my doctoral study. What this effectively means is that this narrative exposition fulfils the function of a more 'traditional' dissertation.



Autoethnographic research and writing problematises the self in relation to its enquiry through a merging of narrator and narrated, perceiver and perceived, and experiencer and experienced. It has its roots in the reflexive turn in narrative and anthropological studies towards the end of the twentieth century (Richards 2012). While I anticipated early on in my research process that I would draw on a combination of Narrative, Performative, Arts-based and Artistic research practices to investigate and communicate various aspects of this study, the emphasis on autoethnography as the overarching means of ‘exploring the ethical tensions of license and limits in drama, theatre and performance education’ arose as a result of the evolution and unfolding of this study itself. Rather than choosing autoethnography, I feel it chose me<sup>7</sup>.

This *Performed Narrative* will demonstrate, discuss and reflect on a diversity of self reflexive practices, processes, improvisations, tools, exercises and tasks that I drew on, and in some cases devised myself, to facilitate my exploration. Collectively, and when applied rigorously and diligently in an ongoing manner, these individual processes and practices constitute what I have come to call a *practice* of ethical self enquiry. In the process of describing and reflecting on this practice, I am simultaneously demonstrating and engaging in it. In simple terms: the *Performed Narrative embodies* the ethical self enquiry practice itself.

In order to demonstrate the practice it seeks simultaneously to *discover* as it unfolds, this study bridges the divide between form and content and emphasises process over product. This is motivated on the grounds that in recent years there has been a performative “push” in both ethics and research (Conrad 2006: 445). Performative ethics is centred on ways of acting in the world (of assuming personal responsibility and ethical virtuosity) “in order to change it” (Denzin 2003: 228). And in research, writes Conrad (2006: 445), “[t]he performative push encourages research that is creative, passionate, visceral, and kinetic”; such work focuses on “process over product”, is “critically reflexive on the part of the researcher” and “experiments with form”.

I approach autoethnography as a research *and* presentation practice, which means that the process by which I came to organise, arrange and structure this *Performed Narrative* is situated as a research practice in its own right, rather than being an accounting/recounting of prior research. In order to make sense of this I came to refer to the formulation of this *Performed Narrative* as the *Legō Approach*. The inspiration for the use of the Latin ‘legō’ derives from its etymology which includes: “to gather or collect” (Wiktionary, “Legō”: Webpage), “I put together” and “I study” (Online Etymology Dictionary, “Legō”: Webpage). As a creative exploratory process and investigative mechanism in its own right, this narrative gathers, as under an umbrella, all the sub-narratives which form the

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<sup>7</sup> For more detailed exposition regarding this development, see Chapter 9.



constituent parts of my explorations. The *Performed Narrative* outlines the personal synoetic<sup>8</sup> journey I undertook as I studied, digested, and analysed my experiences and put together, formulated and articulated my exploration. It situates ethical self enquiry as *serious play*.

Composing the *Performed Narrative* was the third and final phase of my research. The choices I was confronted with at this stage - such as selecting inclusions and omissions, and making stylistic and structural choices - had an ethical dimension. Navigating these choices became part of my continued ethical education and maturation. Certain choices involved navigating similar tensions to those I identified in drama, theatre and performance education during the course of this enquiry.

Drawing on the work of philosopher Charles Taylor (1989), Brinkman suggests that identity cannot be separated from moral inquiry or narrative studies (2008: 411). “In order to have a sense of who we are, we have to have a notion of how we have become, and of where we are going” (Taylor in Brinkman 2008: 411). Plummer (2001) talks of “the search for the self” as being the “‘hallmark’ of auto/biographical form” (in Campbell 2010: 31). As Johnson (1993: 211) puts it, morality is “one of our primary forms of self-expression and self-definition. It is the main arena in which we project ourselves and pursue our sense of what we hope to become”. The process of autoethnographic research and writing inculcates the dissolution of an old self and the simultaneous imagining of a future potential. It involves an aspiration toward, and the becoming of, a more ethical being. In Brinkman’s view it is only in narrative form that such an evolution can be captured (2008: 411). He suggests that the human being cannot be defined as an “object” or “substance” but rather as a “happening” or “event” that emerges through time, and “such happenings or events are to be grasped not in a causal framework citing universal laws, but in a normative framework citing interpretive structures, values, and reasons for action” (Brinkman 2006 in Brinkman 2008: 411).

What is of utmost importance to acknowledge in this regard then, is that the person writing these words and the person who set out on this study is, and is not, the same. As Richards observes:

It is very easy to fall back into the traditional view that story-telling is an act of memory alone. It is particularly easy when the events you are writing about happened long ago and you are cudgelling your brains to remember them. Who you were then is not quite who you are now and, at the same time, it is. It is as if your narrative self - both the self you are constructing in the narrative and yourself as narrator - are a “third” version of you. These entities are not you present or past, but a blurring of the two and, at the same time, someone else (2012: 92).

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<sup>8</sup> Cloud and Kritsonis (2008: 2) describe synoetics as embracing what “Michael Polanyi calls ‘personal knowledge’ and Martin Buber the ‘I-Thou’ relation”. They explain the term as being derived from “the Greek *synoesis*, meaning ‘meditative thought,’” and then compound this with “syn, meaning ‘with’ ‘together,’ and *noesis*, meaning ‘cognition’” (2008: 2). Emphases in original.

I recognise this ‘third’ self as an act of transformation and transcendence, and this is something which is central to this research on a number of levels. According to Brinkman (2008: 411) our identities are “formed by our commitments to issues of moral worth,” and yet should not be understood as being fixed. Instead he suggests that identity and “living a life” should be seen as “a quest, as a kind of craving to be rightly placed in relation to the good” (2008: 411). Narratives play a critical role in assisting us to understand the temporal unfolding of our life journey, and it is our movements in relation to values we ascribe to that grants us insight into our personal evolution (Brinkman 2008: 411): “It only makes sense to ascribe direction to a life if we can distinguish between more or less significant moments, events or experiences. But in doing this we are articulating a changing relation to the good” (Smith 2002 in Brinkman 2008: 411).

This *Performed Narrative* embodies my changing relation to the “good”, which means that sharing my story of ethical self enquiry from the perspective of an ‘insider’ will grant other educators the opportunity to observe the shifts and changes in my personal moral constitution. This includes my attitudes, beliefs, understandings, “innerstandings” (personal orientations) (Heathcote and Bolton 1995 in Grainger and Kendall-Seatter 2003: 26) and “interstandings” (relation to others) (Taylor and Saarinen 1994 in Sinner et al. 2006: 1247), as well as my level of philosophical and practical competency regarding ethics as a discipline. Hence the range of motion between the researcher who began this study and the researcher who assembled this dissertation as a *Performed Narrative* should be the truest measure of the value of this exploration.

As such this narrative aims to transcend the representation of experience in the form of an artefact only; as a demonstration and performative practice it strives to create an opportunity for a reader to *embody* an experience of ethical self enquiry:

The process or production of writing is as essential to its meaning as its content and, indeed, the two are indivisible, because meaning is produced in how one says something. We can no longer naively assert that writing is merely the recording of data or the reflection of an external “truth”. Instead, a text is not only an artefact, but it also has an autonomous existence from the experience it is allegedly recording, so much so that a text can be seen as being a new type of experience altogether (Richards 2012: 55).

As I pendulum between past, present and future selves, and ‘mind the gap’ between who I was, who I am as I write, and as a consequence thereof who I am becoming, I simultaneously illuminate some of the defining contours and features of the territory of licence and limits (ethical freedoms and constraints) in drama, theatre and performance education - and thereby delineate the ‘gap’ between ignorance and enlightenment. If this approach proves successful, my journey should serve as a travel guide to be drawn from, a parable to be reflected on, and a creative prompt towards action. It is not

intended in the least to be followed by rote, but rather to illustrate what practicing ethical self enquiry might mean for an educator and others.

In the formulating of this narrative I am textually performing what I discovered about ethics, performance and education, and how I did so. Through this *Performed Narrative* I hope to vivify a process that was immediate and tactile in its unfolding, in a manner that allows a reader to see when and why I reached certain conclusions, where my struggles and personal issues and exposures lay in ambush, and how I transcended my limitations of fear, doubt, shame, guilt, arrogance and ignorance; or failed to do so.

#### 1.4 Going behind the scenes - stylistic and structural innovations and explorations

Ethical self enquiry requires both the courage to change and the humility borne from accepting personal limitations. A willingness to investigate ethical considerations in our professional approaches and practices, confront potential deficits in our personal moral orientations, and be exposed to new ideas, requires plasticity<sup>9</sup> of mind - a willingness to cope with contradictions and ambiguity and to transform into 'other' (unknown) aspects of self. This plasticity of mind implies a plasticity, and thus multiplicity<sup>10</sup>, of self-identity; a malleability of (moral or ethical) character for good or ill. Because sincere self scrutiny irrevocably alters and transforms us, it is central to ethics, which is not set in stone but "dynamic" (Carter 2009: 3). This crucial recognition interconnects the disciplines of ethics, performance and its education and research. Ethics evolves in accordance with the complexity of circumstance, context and relations. In order to both demonstrate and navigate this dynamism, this *Performed Narrative* relies on stylistic and structural innovations offered by Autoethnographic, Narrative, Performative, Arts-based and Artistic research practices and methods. In terms of both research and presentation, the methodologies employed in this enquiry afford a great deal of scope for innovation and experimentation with form and content (Spry 2001, Conrad 2006, Sinner et al. 2006, Klein 2010, Barone and Eisner 2012, Richards 2012).

In keeping with the title of this chapter, it is therefore appropriate to brief the reader with regard to certain innovations that have already been revealed, and to prepare and orient for those yet to come.

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<sup>9</sup> 'Neuroplasticity' is a term used to describe the fact that the brain can be sculpted with repetition and practice. According to Matousek (2011: 9) this recent advance in neuroscience flies in face of "old wives tales that humans are born with a fixed number of brain cells that only diminish over time", and has granted psychologists new insights into the potential for personal growth.

<sup>10</sup> "[A] century's worth of experiments suggests that people's actual behavior is not driven by permanent traits that apply from one context to another. [...] Behavior does not exhibit what the psychologists call 'cross-situational stability'. [...] [P]eople don't have one permanent thing called character. We each have a multiplicity of tendencies inside, which are activated by this or that context" (Brooks 2009 in Erhard 2009: 9).

**1. Titles and headings:** Chapter and section titles may at times serve as creative prompts designed to inspire insight as opposed to offering explanation only. For example, the lack of appropriate briefing and debriefing processes and practices in performance and its education have been identified as key ethical concerns (Geer 1992, Seton 2006, 2009, 2010, Szlawieniec-Haw 2012). The titling of this introductory chapter as ‘Briefing’<sup>11</sup> prepares the reader to anticipate a departure from structural and stylistic conventions that may be associated with, or expected from, a traditional dissertation.

I make extensive use of the analogy of ‘going on a fishing expedition’ to describe many of the practices I engaged during this enquiry - and this is reflected in many chapter and section titles. I found this analogy extremely useful and applicable because as I pursued the questions and concerns posed at the start of my research I was not always explicitly aware of what they would yield, nor could I always go directly towards an answer or conclusions; as findings arose, they would re-direct my explorations into new territories, and sometimes into seemingly unrelated fields. This resulted in new strategies being devised and developed ‘on the wing’, so to speak. This is methodologically in keeping with some of the pertinent features of qualitative research (Holliday 2007: 9-10)<sup>12</sup>, where researchers “go into the field to see what is going on”, trust their conviction that what is important will be revealed as the investigation unfolds, remain adaptive and sensitive to emergent conditions and confidently develop strategies to address changes in situation.

**2. Reflection versus analysis:** Throughout this writing I will offer *reflections* on my process, both through re-visiting and re-appraising my historical experiences in drama, theatre and performance, and more directly in relation to my experience of investigating them. The emphasis resides less on analysing the *results* of my explorations and more on observing the *effects* various practices had on me and how I responded to them (how they affected my thoughts and feelings); this is to offer guidance to others who follow a similar process of ethical self enquiry so that they might be adequately briefed and prepared as to what to expect in their own process. For example: the ethical self enquiry process developed and described in this narrative endeavoured to identify ethical concerns; those which I personally identified are shared as examples of what such a process<sup>13</sup> might uncover, however they are not analysed or ‘unpacked’ in detail except in situ where doing so sheds light on the process of ethical self enquiry itself. In such instances support and motivation for the validity of these specific concerns is provided primarily in relation to the process of ethical self enquiry, although in doing so a more general validation might be achieved. However, the emphasis resides on the *process* of identifying concerns and my reflections on doing so as opposed to the concerns themselves.

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<sup>11</sup> I am indebted to my supervisor for the suggestion that the concluding chapter of this narrative be titled ‘Debriefing’. I then drew this innovation through to this introductory chapter also.

<sup>12</sup> Further support and motivation for the use of ‘unfolding’ or emergent research practices is offered in Section 1.6.

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter 7.

During the second or literary phase of research these personal reflections were expanded or enhanced by co-mingling, infusing or inter-meshing them with reflections offered by academics and commentators from a diversity of relevant disciplines and fields of enquiry. Here again the emphasis was on the *effects* the ideas of others had on me, the impacts they had on my understanding and my process of ethical education and maturation relative to a process of ethical self enquiry, rather than on a critical analysis of congruent or divergent theories and concepts.

**3. A personal versus scholarly voice:** This *Performed Narrative* is an autoethnographical mechanism that aims to capture and reference the *living*<sup>14</sup> process of transformation in my ethical knowledge and moral character as research progressed. Style and tone therefore range between the personal and the scholarly, the conversational or prosaic and the poetic, and within one sentence, paragraph or section. This strategy is supported by Spry's assertion that:

Performing autoethnography provides a space for the emancipation of the voice and body in academic discourse through breaking the boundaries of stylistic form, and by reintroducing the body to the mind in the process of living research. [P]erforming Autoethnography can emancipate the scholarly voice from the monostylistic confines of academic discourse. The opening up of stylistic form in academic writing provides the opportunity for a diversity of content (2001: 719).

A central premise of this research has been to identify, communicate and confront personal beliefs and values and pay them due recognition; thus to understand the complex relationship between how I think and feel, and how this uniquely configured and evolving ethical constitution impacts choices I have made (and continue to make) as an educator. At times I candidly express personal emotions and opinions and adopt a 'confessional' tone. Adopting a more personal voice may to some extent contest the "authority" of a more "educated account" (Swindells 1995: 7), yet autoethnography affords the personal voice a space to be heard (Spry 2001, Richards 2012). I also position this issue in relation to Sagan's assertion that "every time we exercise self-criticism, every time we test our ideas against the outside world, we are doing science" (cited in Prigge S. 2014: 113).

The use of a personal voice does not undermine or diminish the status of traditional academic discourse, but in fact supports the specific conditions imposed by the nature and characteristics of self-research. Supporter of artistic research Klein (2010: 6) asserts that "artistic knowledge is sensual and physical", it is an "embodied knowledge" and thus ultimately the knowledge it seeks is "a *felt*

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<sup>14</sup> "[P]erforming autoethnography provides space for the living, experiencing, and researching body to be seen and felt. It is not that our bodies haven't been in our work, rather, they have been shrouded in our research by dualistic separations of Mind and Body. We have been expected to accept the myth of the researcher as a detached head - the object of Thought, Rationality, and Reason - floating from research site to research site thinking and speaking, while its profane counterpart, the Body, lurks unseen, unruly, and uncontrollable in the shadows of the Great Halls of the Academy. The Body has become the hysterical and embarrassing relative, a 'shut in' in the academy's ivory tower" (Spry: 719-720).

knowledge”<sup>15</sup>. In order to access and understand my personal ethos - the oftentimes ‘hidden’ and largely automatic code whereby I navigate daily decisions and ethical choices - this process of self enquiry centred on seeking a ‘felt’ knowledge. I attempted to raise my deepest, unconscious intentions, feelings and drives to consciousness and to find the words to articulate them. I also sought a ‘felt’ relation to the statements and observations of the various commentators and researchers I encountered during my explorations, as a means to better know where I stand in relation to what they might promote as being ‘acceptable’ or ‘unacceptable’, ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ and ‘ethical’ or ‘unethical’.

The process and practice of ethical self enquiry that this study demonstrates forms part of a quest to find my ethical truth - it reflects my desire to orientate myself in relation to the ‘good’ (Brinkman 2008: 411) so that I might better aspire to it - and thus my true voice. This voice is not a singularity, but can best be observed embedded within “the discursive constructions of different selves” (Campbell 2010: 31) and the diverse voices with which I thus speak and have spoken. Revealing the repertoire of voices I use, ranging in some instances from the voice of the victim to the voice of the perpetrator, or from the voice of the novice to the initiate, is inescapably a form of confession implying exposure and requiring honesty; every voice is, in its own right, *a* truth which forms part of my greater truth. I cannot deny that I am afraid of exposing some of my voices. I am concerned that revealing certain voices will undermine my supposed authority, that fellow educators will see me as weak or disloyal, or that past and present students may recognise my inadequacies. Spry addresses this problem directly:

Coaxing the body from the shadows of academe and consciously integrating it into the process and production of knowledge requires that we view knowledge in the context of the body from which it is generated. I must be ready to *walk the talk* of my scholarship by putting my politically marked body on the lines of the printed text. This kind of embodied methodology is - and should feel - *risky* (Spry 2001: 719-720)<sup>16</sup>.

Having the courage to be honest with ourselves about what we truly feel, believe in and value, and making a stand for it by expressing and communicating it to others, is challenging most significantly when this honesty might rub our colleagues and peers up the wrong way. During the course of this enquiry I discovered that almost all of the ethical concerns the review of my own experience in the South African context yielded, were mirrored in literature offered by other commentators. My voice becomes part of a chorus of voices calling for change on the international stage, but this does not mean I will, or can even expect to, find support and affirmation from those within my immediate context; and this unavoidably implies risk. However, in order to *demonstrate* a process and practice of ethical self enquiry I believe this risk is necessary.

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<sup>15</sup> Emphasis in original.

<sup>16</sup> Emphases added.



**4. The enquiring ‘self’:** In autoethnographic and arts-based research the self and his or her background assumptions may be understood to be embodied in the act of exposition and implicit in the narration or presentation itself. Thus my interpretation of the term ‘self’ should become increasingly evident to the reader as he or she encounters my unfolding self-expression in the pages to come. The notion of the self or selfhood has, since the writing of William James (1890), become a robust field of enquiry in both sociology and psychology (Gecas 1982: 1). In terms of formally delineating the term ‘self’ and how this relates to ethics in particular much can be said because the term and its full measure is highly contested and yet remains in many respects elusive (Gecas 1982, Walsh-Bowers 2006). My use of the term ‘self’ is liberal in nature and congruent with understandings offered by commentators such as philosopher Charles Taylor cited previously. In keeping with the strategy of ‘Reflection versus analysis’ detailed in point 2 of this section my exploration of the term ‘self’ is limited to theories that offer insight and understanding, thus support of and congruence with my own views, even while I acknowledge the scope and diversity of potential counter positions.

In simple terms my approach to, and understanding of, the self within the constraints of this enquiry rests on a performative and thus embodied ‘*sense of self*’ - thus the *self in action* and the *self as experience*. Throughout this study I emphasise personal ethical accountability and responsibility which may seem to favour a modernist autonomous, authentic or “core” delineation of the self (Walsh-Bowers 2006: 683). However, while I do ascribe to the theory of a core ‘inner self’ or the existence of an inner witness to multiple externalised conceptualisations of the self (Harré 1991), in congruence with advocates of self-in-relation theory I also recognise the self as developmentally and experientially subject to dialogical exchanges with others (Surrey 1991: 52). Thus the emphasis I place on assuming personal accountability and responsibility for one’s ethical development and behaviour should be understood as an act of service to and co-creation with the ‘other’ or those with whom one is in relation. And thus a ‘personal ethos’ as a form of self-definition (which is the manner in which I explore it in this narrative) must necessarily be understood as subject to influence by, and co-creation with the other; yet this ‘self’ is still recognised as being rooted at its core to the inner witness or conscience. In the *Personal Ethics Questionnaire* I created and answered as part of my self enquiry research practice and which will be explored in more detail in Chapter Four, my interpretation of the term ‘conscience’ provides insight with regard to this understanding of the self:

#### **How do I personally define conscience?**

**16/02/14**

Conscience, in my understanding, is not simply about feeling good or bad about choices and actions, it has to do with recognition of the interconnectedness of all things. Conscience grows when we traverse deeper into the self, and at the deeper levels we recognise that the self is intimately connected to other selves and thus all things. Conscience is thus a signal that onsets the realisation that no one singular entity stands alone in isolation or can be divided from anything else. A ‘moment of conscience’ or a ‘feeling of conscience’ is a moment of true experience, where the veils of illusory separation fall away and the interconnectedness of all things is directly apprehended at the level of embodiment. This is not an intellectual exercise, or a rationalising or reasoning of right and wrong, but an immediate state of

knowing that occurs at the level of being. Thus what I do to others I do to myself and vice versa. Compassion and empathy are about personal attunement (integrity and authenticity) in symphony with or harmony with attunement to others. To be self-attuned to, or in empathy with yourself means you are whole within yourself: harmonious. To be attuned to, or in empathy with others means your harmonious resonance accords and harmonises with the other systems (people, institutions, society, nations) which surround you; you are in harmony within yourself and within your place in the bigger picture. Conscience is a signal of falling out of accord, or being in disharmony or discord with yourself, and by implication and extension therefore with the world that surrounds you. Conscience is a marker that indicates when you disconnect or fall out of empathy with your place in world – conscience signifies the fall from grace or the ‘falling out of grace’ (falling out of harmony and belonging) (Prigge 2014c: 22).

Again in my *Personal Ethics Questionnaire*, my conceptualisation and articulation of what I call my “personal ethos” offers further insight into the position regarding the nature of the self which I will favour in this narrative; a self that is experientially individuated (inner self) yet functions in concert (dialogue) with others:

**How would I delineate my ethical orientation or ‘personal code of ethics’? What aspects or elements does it consist of?**

18/02/14

- I am not more or less special or important than anyone else. My personal wants and needs do not take precedence over those who are affected by my decisions and choices. What I do to others I do to myself. Equally I am not a servant to others and do not place the needs of anyone above my own.
- All human interactions are transactions and negotiations; a dialogue of give and take; acts of reciprocity.
- Every situation is unique and must be treated according to the given circumstances, context, and the individuals involved.
- Everyone is special in their own right, but everyone is different. Equality and equivalence are not the same. Everyone must be treated on their own terms. To respect equality does not, and should not, imply treating everybody the same. Everyone should be treated according to their level of consciousness and their unique orientation (beliefs, values, culture) in the world.
- All negotiations of co-operation must respect difference as a primary point of departure. Intelligent co-operation is a celebration of individuality and a simultaneous celebration of interdependence. Nothing can exist in isolation and every unique part is necessary, in its uniqueness, to contribute to an optimally functional whole.
- Right or wrong have to do with that which evolves one’s consciousness or limits its growth, what is a harmonising of the sub-selves and their unified source-self, and what is not. This does not happen in isolation and thus others, and the impacts on their present and future due to your actions, must always be accounted for at all times; but never take precedence over personal potentials (Prigge 2014c: 22-23).

**5. Revealing the methodological workings<sup>17</sup>:** Richards describes autoethnographic enquiry as “a specific sort of quest that involves not only going forward, but also going back and looking again - re-searching” (2012: 62). The emergence of an autoethnographic approach in the demonstration and communication of a process and practice of ethical self enquiry repeatedly challenged me to review and account for shifts and changes in the evolution of this narrative exploration. Holliday (2007: 11) refers to the work of Walford (1991) who “states that qualitative researchers have [...] contributed to

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<sup>17</sup> Holliday 2007: 12.



an illusion of objectivity in previous years by making their procedures appear more straightforward than they really are. Research needs to be accompanied by accounts of how it was really done”. According to Holliday “qualitative researchers are increasingly expected to come out and tell it as it really happened” (2007: 11). Throughout this narrative I will endeavour to reveal the ‘messiness’ (Walford 1991 in Holliday 2007: 11) of my evolving and emerging research choices. Doing so highlights the methodological emphasis on ‘exploration’ in this narrative in general, and particularly in so far as it pertains to ethical self enquiry<sup>18</sup>.

Owing to the fact that this narrative seeks to merge form and content, and emphasises process over product, methodological underpinnings may be returned to, reinforced, reframed and even discovered at times. Whilst methodological choices are motivated primarily in this chapter, an ongoing discussion of research methods and practices will be dispersed throughout the *Performed Narrative*. This is in keeping with the rigour of qualitative research, where “research has to *show its workings* every single time” (Holliday 2007: 12)<sup>19</sup>. The methodological underpinnings of this study are thus vital to positioning a practice of ethical self enquiry as a form of ongoing pedagogical review and evolution. Ethical rigour is no less than a form of rigorous (self) research practice.

**6. License and limits - ethical considerations and delineations of study:** Navigating research ethics was an ongoing process during the course of formulating this *Performed Narrative* and a diversity of ethical considerations arose as I worked. These will be discussed in context as this narrative unfolds<sup>20</sup>.

At the outset however, I would like to state clearly that as a drama, theatre and performance educator I make no claims to being an ethicist. Although I anticipated that in the course of this study I would inevitably become more versed in the rigorous discipline of ethics, I acknowledge that my understanding and engagement remains at the level of *seeking out concerns* and *proposing solutions* that have a direct bearing on the culture and context from which I come, and the perspective from which I am approaching this enquiry. While this may be appropriate within the context of autoethnographic method and self-reflexive enquiry I acknowledge that in terms of ethics proper it necessarily limits the scope of this study to the relatively autonomous and subjective or personal. My social and historical orientation situates me as a privileged, white, South African male, and my education and experience as an educator has predominantly taken place within socially and economically advantaged contexts (Rhodes University, The University of Cape Town, Wits University, The University of Cape Town, CityVarsity Cape Town, Vega Brand Communication School Gauteng and Stellenbosch University). In keeping with my subjective experience my

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<sup>18</sup> I appreciate that revealing this ‘messiness’ may challenge a reader’s sense of coherence, especially in this first chapter, but I endeavour to bring everyone ‘safely back to port’ in later chapters having demonstrated the *complexity* of ethical self enquiry and ethics in general.

<sup>19</sup> Emphasis in original.

<sup>20</sup> See in particular Chapter 9.

perspective on performance education might be described as liberal in nature. In keeping with the strategy of ‘Reflection versus analysis’ described in point 2 of this section, references to the broader field of ethics will extend only so far as seeking support and insight into my personal ethos and the basis upon which I have historically, and in the present continue to make choices in my pedagogical practice. While there undoubtedly exists a rich potential for exploring counter discourses to those which will be mentioned in the narrative to come (intuitive ethics, virtue ethics and situationist ethics in particular), and also for engaging in the complex philosophical debate around ethics in contemporary times, my focus remains on the performative and experiential – thus personal practice.

I also acknowledge that any task of generating ethical frameworks must be approached with care and consideration for all stakeholders in a particular context, to defuse the potential volatility implicit in such a process of shifting power and responsibility. Interrogating ethics necessarily involves the exposure and confrontation of potentially unethical practices; a key consideration must be to strive to avoid strategies of blaming or fault-finding, and get to the important work of creating change in as sensitive and harmonious manner as possible. This does not imply skirting issues that cause concern or refraining from critique, but calls attention to working empathetically. I endeavoured at all times to work with a high degree of sensitivity to the viewpoints of all parties this study may include and impact. That said, this study pointedly addresses the potential that the habitus of performance and its education may be ethically compromised and requires review, and the overriding emphasis thus resides with critique.

The fact that this study will rely on my own personal experiences frames and locates it distinctly within the South African context, although supporting research will be drawn from outside the country.

The personal nature of this study renders the scope limited, and by no means will it be inferred that personal experience inevitably holds more general/universal value, appeal or merit; even while it is anticipated that a broader relevance might be achieved through sharing my process of ethical self enquiry and its outcomes.

The focus will reside predominantly at the tertiary institutional level although reference will be made to the broader context of industry.

**7. Demonstration as education and vice versa:** I position this narrative performance as a form of ethical education for both myself and others. Here I cast myself as a seeker on a quest to become more conscious regarding ethics within the context of performance and its education and in general. I anticipate that in the process of revealing, and reflecting on, my process of ethical education and

maturation, the reader will experience an equivalent expansion of his or her own knowledge in this regard.

Revealing my process of discovery and learning means that the narrative performance: makes “foreys” (Holliday 2007: 9) into the broader landscape (a multi-disciplinary approach which may lead to temporary deviations from the ‘golden thread’ of an issue being explored) and ‘meanders’ through philosophical musings, or ‘lingers’ in a territory before returning to, or resolving, a particular point; cycles back to various issues, repeating and reinforcing them; views the same issue, concept or idea from multiple perspectives and in accordance with how it resonates or registers across different contexts and sections. For example, the idea of the multiplicity of self-identity and its relation to ethics and this study, as already touched upon, will emerge again and again as one I encountered and explored through the various research practices I employed. In this instance, repetition and cycling back reveals *and* comments on the complexity of self-identity and highlights its central importance to ethical self enquiry in particular, as well as ethics in general.

Speaking about the same issues and concerns in several different ways reveals the nuanced differences in their features and reinforces the process of knowledge acquisition, simultaneously fostering the capacity to learn how to effectively navigate and manage the complex relations that exist between different issues. To frame this within the analogy of ‘fishing’ once more, this may be likened to the inter-meshing, or weave, of the various ‘strands’ that comprise the ‘fishing net’ of my research practice. The narrative offers a process of immersion within the various terrains being explored, and repetition becomes a form of ‘rehearsal’ or ‘practice’. The idea that developing virtues or attaining ethical ‘virtuosity’ through repetition or ‘practice’ as a means to establishing new habits, and that ethical education may be facilitated and enhanced by immersion, will recur in this narrative.

Again these innovations reference an emphasis on seeking a merging of form and content and foreground process over product.

**8. Hanging and guiding questions:** During the course of this *Performed Narrative* I often ask questions that guide deeper exploration rather than seeking definitive answer to them. Questions are used to stimulate new research directions and may themselves be left hanging. I position this in relation to ethical self enquiry as an ongoing (lifelong) process of immersion in, and penetration of, diverse territories. This implies venturing ever deeper to learn, grow and evolve without always expecting a definitive conclusion or resolution. For this reason I came to refer to the preliminary research question of this study as a ‘guiding question’<sup>21</sup> or orientational impulse that initiated and directed the subsequent exploration. I draw support for this approach from Sinner et al.:

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<sup>21</sup> See Section 1.5.4 of this chapter for further exposition.

Each occasion represents an active search for meaning. Although most researchers select [...] sources to answer a specific research question, an arts-based researcher may or may not seek to answer a specific research question. Instead, sources may generate even more questions and take new and unexpected directions in the course of inquiry, often making sources both the process and product of arts-based research (2006: 1242).

**9. Congruence and resonance - *Secondary Primacy*:** This *Performed Narrative* makes extensive use of quotations, employed independently (as whole sentences or paragraphs, as exemplified by the Sinner et al. quotation above) as well as entwined (with personal observations, as partial sentences or fragmented inclusions). A key element of this enquiry centres on finding my own voice; yet this takes place in concert with learning a new discourse on ethics and research methods. Relying on the words of others who have already penetrated worlds that relate directly to, or shed light on, the world of this narrative, represents for me a form of discovering my own voice expressed in and through the words of others. These inclusions symbolise my personal dialogue with the ‘other’; in the same way that with the inclusion of a diversity of characters in the script of a play becomes a reflection of, and reference to, the primary character. In the performing arts, actors bring life to characters and actions scripted by playwrights, dancers embody vocabulary shaped by choreographers, and musicians play notes penned by composers. Doing so requires a process of internalisation and becomes a form of self-expression of, and in relation to, an ‘other’. Choosing whose words offer congruence and support becomes a means of seeing the self reflected and expressed more clearly, and also, in many instances, challenged<sup>22</sup>.

This strategy draws support from *Secondary Primacy*, a methodological innovation that has emerged through my personal dialogue with embodiment practitioner Samantha Prigge of Stellenbosch University during course of the last fifteen years, and which formed a significant part of the methodological underpinning of her Doctoral dissertation (2014). *Secondary Primacy* is a strategy which foregrounds “the emergence of simultaneous discovery and expression by differential means and/or within different contexts” (Prigge S. 2014: 78). Prigge describes it as “primarily a semantic strategy” in which:

[T]he particular phrasing of relevant ideas by other practitioners, researchers, academics, scientists and philosophers from a diversity of disciplines are treated *as if they are my own* - without paraphrasing, or syntactical re-ordering, to infer a possible implicit meaning for a reader/spectator. This is equivalent to a performative strategy of employing an imaginative *what if* - of ‘walking in someone else’s shoes’ by enacting not only a character’s choice of words, but also their tone and cadence of phrasing [...] (2014: 77)<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> For further exposition of the challenge implied by literary review as an ‘ethical encounter’ or dialogue, see Chapter 8.

<sup>23</sup> Emphases in original.

This relates directly to the experience I had when confronting diverse ethical systems and theories (which I describe as ‘trying on different costumes’) during the course of reviewing existing literature in the second phase of research for this enquiry<sup>24</sup>.

**10. Fictional examples:** This study foregrounds subjective personal orientations and historical experience. This is problematised in the context of research ethics owing to the fact that sharing and discussing events from my past inculcates persons and institutions without their informed consent. Managing this circumstance impacted the evolution of this study and is discussed in detail in Chapter Nine. In place of describing actual events, the chosen solution to this situation was to offer fictionalised narrative accounts or *Parables* that share a great degree of verisimilitude to past experience. However, this increased the complexity of sharing these examples. Throughout the *Performed Narrative* I will use footnotes to direct the reader to Chapter Seven where the *Parables* and a tabulated list of the suggested ethical concerns they reflect has been included. As a result, reflections on the process of ethical self enquiry may at times favour the general, except where it is possible to share information that does not infringe on the rights of others.

**11. The ‘moral actor’:** The term ‘moral actor’ is used in this narrative to denote both an ethical performer as well as an ethical social agent (Walsh-Bowers 2006). Although there is an emphasis in this enquiry on actor training and thus the ethical conduct of educators and actors (in the performative sense), mentioning “Drama”, “Theatre” and “Performance” in the title of this *Performed Narrative* invites the reader to remain cognisant at all times that the enquiry into the ethicality of behaviours and practices extends to all role players involved in this territory, thus: students, educators, actors, directors, choreographers, administrators, producers, actor agents, casting agents, scriptwriters, set, lighting, costume and stage designers etc.

## **1.5 Reconstituting the net: launching impulses, stimulating hypotheses, guiding questions and emergent aims**

### **1.5.1 Shattering the “illusion of objectivity”<sup>25</sup>**

In the previous section (1.4) I mentioned that I would endeavour to reveal the ‘messiness’ of my unfolding research practice, and it is with regard to research hypotheses, aims and questions that this becomes most acutely challenging. It is common for a research proposal to mature into the first chapter of a dissertation and my evolving proposal underwent numerous revisions before settling into

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<sup>24</sup> See Chapter 8 for further exposition.

<sup>25</sup> Holliday 2014: 11.

the words I am writing here. A first chapter may often be revised and reframed last of all to ensure consistency and to address where a study went versus where it was anticipated it would go.

In keeping with Holliday's (2007: 11) assertion that qualitative researchers should reveal their research as it really unfolded and describe what actually happened, I found myself confronted with twin equally alluring temptations when I 'returned to harbour', so to speak. On the one hand I could embrace the scope of innovation offered by the research methodologies being employed and refrain from offering hypotheses, goals and aims, or even a central research question for that matter. Such methodologies comfortably accommodate such choices (Sinner et al. 2006). Alternatively, I could adapt and adjust my aims and goals to suit where my research had led me. I could make 'as if' I did everything on purpose and perpetuate the "illusion of objectivity" (Holliday 2007: 11) prevalent in the field of qualitative research. As my enquiry progressed and I continually "re-searched" (Richards 2012: 62) my driving intentions and motivations, I found that my insight into what I was really attempting to do in this study, and my ability to articulate it, transformed - and in many respects improved. As new possibilities opened up, and as emergent limitations became apparent, my hypotheses, questions, goals, aims, as well as my relation to them, evolved.

Kilbourn observes that "[w]riting that is self-conscious tends to reflect the layers and complexity of the process of a dissertation as it unfolds from conceptualization to finished product" (in Sinner et al. 2006: 1251). It would require a study in its own right to map and share each iteration of my evolving objectives. In large part this is attributable to the shift that occurred at the end of my first, and well into my second phase of research, to autoethnography as a research and presentation practice, and the fact that this choice arose as a result of, or in response to, the unique conditions of my enquiry. The complexity of navigating this shift lies in managing timelines. This *Performed Narrative* is a research phase in its own right that unfolds in the present while retrospectively reflecting on the first phase of research that was concluded before it began, and on the second phase of research that in some instances concluded before it did, but in others unfolded in tandem<sup>26</sup>.

My solution to this quandary lies in favouring simplicity. In keeping with the scope offered by autoethnographic methods (Richards 2012) I will tell the story of what I actually did and also tell the story of what I aim to do in the telling. This narrative can be told in many ways, and now, in the present I have the opportunity to reflect as accurately as possible my intentions in both the past and present sense. What follows in this section is the result of reflecting on numerous *rehearsals* (drafts) of this material and filtering it through the 'net' of insights and perspectives gained during the course of this enquiry. It is only in hindsight that we truly understand both what we did and why we did it. This is in keeping with philosophical and scientific understandings regarding the nature of decision making, and that despite our best aspirations toward autonomy decisions can only ever be observed

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<sup>26</sup> Research Phases will be described in some detail in Section 1.6 to follow.

and understood retrospectively (Irvine 2006, Matousek 2011). Such recognition is important in terms of navigating the complexity of ethics and will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four. In Section 1.3 I referred to the observation by Richards (2012: 92) that the act of writing births an emergent ‘third’ self which is comprised of the past self co-mingled with the narrating self. In this sense the hypotheses, questions, goals and aims offered in this section are too a ‘third’ edition. They simultaneously reference where I originally approached this study from, and where I am currently approaching it from. Instead of ‘repairing’ the ‘net’ I originally used when approaching this study, or ‘creating’ a ‘new’ ‘net’, what follows is a ‘reconstituted net’ that encapsulates the past and present.

As mentioned previously, the choices I make in performing this narrative have an ethical dimension. As such every inclusion or exclusion is somehow connected to my ongoing ethical self enquiry practice. Demonstrating this practice through recounting my narrative of ‘exploring the ethical tensions of license and limits in Drama, Theatre and Performance education’ has *become*<sup>27</sup> the overarching endeavour of this study.

#### 1.5.2 Creative impulse #1: The Memo

**From:** “Lanon Prigge”

**Date:** Mon, 20 Sep 2013 09:26:31 +0200

**To:** “Lanon Prigge”

**Subject:** Internal memo - End of Year Strategic Planning Focus Group - Ethics in Drama, Theatre and Performance Education

*Dear colleagues,*

*As I am sure you are all aware, ethics in drama, theatre and performance education is becoming increasingly important as an international issue in our discipline. This is aligned strongly with general trends in education and across a broad spectrum of disciplines, and is also in keeping with the drives of the University and our faculty to ensure best practice across all specialisations. I suggest we devote serious consideration to this issue, both to improve and grow our personal and collective practice as educators and to ensure we are in accord with expectations of stakeholders (which bear in mind includes ourselves, our students, their parents, the industry, and not only the institution). I have allocated a full 3 hour ‘block’ within our end of year strategic planning and review meeting to begin the process of how we as a staff will address this, with a view to creating/developing a code of ethics or conduct that we can use as a frame for our department. Please devote some time before we meet to how you would suggest we approach ethics, and in the interim, any suggestions or ideas would be welcomed.*

*Best wishes*

Lanon (Prigge 2014b: 1)

What if, as a staff member of a drama, theatre or performance education department within a tertiary institution, I received this memo? This creative ‘what if’ is where I began my research process for this study. Although I have been informally engaged with ethics in my own practice and through

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<sup>27</sup> For further insight into the notion of ‘Becoming’ and its overall relevance to this enquiry, see Chapter 10.



observations of others for almost two decades now, this process had not been conscientised or organised in any way. In fact, although I was aware of, and began to adjust my teaching practices to address issues regarding my personal pedagogy, I never used the word ‘ethics’ itself to frame this process until embarking on this study. I was working more at the level of what intuitively felt right or wrong, fair or unfair, just or unjust, constructive or destructive and safe or unsafe. This ‘Memo’ (to myself) provided a concrete impulse, a crystallising point of focus and a goal: to work from the unconscious to the conscious, from the intuitive to the rational/deliberate, from improvisation and play to organisation and structure; to make sense of and expand my implicit and explicit ethical knowledge and communicate this in a coherent and hopefully useful manner.

‘The Memo’ is an impulse, but it does not provide a process whereby ethics in personal and collective practice might be thoroughly questioned or whereby tacit and intuitive knowledge might be rigorously extracted, processed, organised and presented. Educators are busy people, and increasing demands within the workplace may mean that they are not only educators but administrators, project managers and co-ordinators amongst a myriad other roles they are expected to fulfil. Despite the most sincere of intentions, it might not be possible for educators to devote the expected or required attention, focus, time and energy to adequately preparing for such a discussion without more guidance or structure.

My history as an educator has been one of insider/outsider. I have worked predominantly part-time as a teacher and curriculum developer and this has afforded me the luxury of being able to witness and comment, review and observe without being caught up in many of the energetic and schedule demands and what might be described as ‘institutional politics’ often associated with being a full-time member of staff (Prigge 2014b: 14). I believe this freedom is in large part what has given me the space and time required to make ethics an ongoing emphasis and interest. Conversely, perhaps the emphasis and interest in ethics has played a role in my conscious and/or unconscious choices to remain an insider/outsider? Irrespective, this *Performed Narrative* becomes an extension of much work I have done over the years, and provides an opportunity for me to continue to improvise and play, but now more seriously.

‘The Memo’ suggests a time-frame which necessarily injects a discipline and focus I have not previously worked with; it calls me to consolidate and ‘test’ a variety of creative exercises and tasks I have previously devised and employed in my own work, to discover new approaches and methods of investigation and exploration, and to demonstrate and communicate these in ways that might both improve my ethical practice and provide utility for other educators.

‘What if’ in a few months I (or any educator) was expected to arrive prepared for this proposed discussion of ethics within a strategic focus group/session? What would I bring to the table? Vague thoughts and suggestions based on contemplations the night before? Or the outcome of a structured



and systematic review process that might result in a comprehensive appraisal of issues that cause concern, and can serve as the beginnings of formulating an aspirational and inspirational ethical code of best practice? What would/could I do to diligently prepare for this discussion and how might my improvisations and creative explorations serve, not necessarily as a template, but as suggestions and examples of what other educators might do to prepare for a focus group? How might my explorations be useful for other educators who do not necessarily have the freedoms, time and focus which the researching and writing of this *Performed Narrative* affords me? How could my explorations fast-track, provide points of entry, inspire insights and offer suggestions others might benefit from engaging/exploring? ‘What if’ ‘The Memo’ had included an attachment of exercises, self investigation processes, ideas for contemplation and so forth, that would result in each staff member arriving with something concrete to share; feeling well prepared and possibly even excited to engage in discussion? What might such an attachment of suggested explorations, exercises and examples include? And what should be the outcome of completing such a process; what would an educator be expected to bring to share?

### 1.5.3 Reconstituting the ‘golden thread’ of the ‘net’

I realised that my approach to ‘The Memo’ was built on certain assumptions and inspired by distinct orientations that could/should be tested as hypotheses:

Contemporary philosophies and theories of ethics in education, as explored by van Nuland in *Teacher codes: Learning from experience* (2009), indicate that ethical codes should emerge from, and/or be embodied by, the particular individuals who work within a specific context if they are to truly take root and be effective (Moss Curtis in van Nuland 2009: 19). One of the dangers associated with imposing ethical frameworks lies in the potential that they might be instituted from the outside-in without taking into account the specific culture they are designed to serve. Implied in such an orientation is the recognition that every individual in a system, or the custodians of the necessary ‘insider-knowledge’, must somehow become accountable for the role they play in both generating and maintaining ethical standards. Extending this line of questioning to its full reach led me to understand that ‘outside-in’ does not only imply interference or influence from the greater systems of education or a specific institution, but might also include the unique culture (for example, a Drama Department or Theatre School) that individual educators might function within. Such a particular culture might equally influence, and impose upon, the ethical orientations of its members through mandated prescriptions.

In Section 1.2 I mentioned that when Seton recognised the habitus of performance and its education might be ethically compromised and require review, he set out to discover “what literature and practices existed in the field of actor training that might offer some guidance [...]” (2010: 6). This

implies an outward movement. Having reached a similar place of recognising the need for ethical review, my impulse by contrast implies an *inward* movement. In lieu of mandated ethical codes and frameworks I am proposing that educators begin the process of negotiating ethics within their personal pedagogy by assuming personal accountability. This foregrounds the value of a process and practice of ethical self enquiry over the general identification and analysis of ethical considerations; thus a preparatory process prior to negotiating ethical value positions and ethical concerns in a group context. The emphasis resides with foregrounding the value of exploring personal *resources* in answer to the discussion of ethical concerns in Drama, Theatre and Performance education. By personal *resources* I mean self motivated effort (autonomous moral agency), conscious and unconscious (tacit) historical experience and knowledge, as well as the creative talents, practices and techniques unique to their artistry and pedagogy.

Recognizing that deep changes in ethical orientations must begin at the level of the person/individual consolidated my choice to explore ethical self enquiry as a basis for this study. It seemed fitting and appropriate, by which I mean just, fair and thus ethical, to enter this territory by exhibiting the courage to explore my own personal *resources* before expecting other educators to review theirs. I realised this would require demonstrating a willing vulnerability on my own part. This furthermore contextualised and supported the potential impact that exploring and sharing personal experiences and stories of unethical practices and behaviours might have (as mentioned in Section 1.2). What if educators came forward and shared their stories as a first step toward developing ethical codes and frameworks? Might such shared vulnerability create a suitable springboard for dialogue? Perhaps such shared vulnerability might offset potential frictions that could arise as a result of discussing, negotiating and addressing ethical concerns?

Emphasising shared stories would necessitate sharing my own stories. To state this in theatrical terms, I realised that I would have to place myself in the position of a ‘stand in’<sup>28</sup> for other educators, and offer my own process of exploration as an example. The process of ethical self enquiry I underwent as a result of these realisations was geared towards investigating and making use of personal *resources* in order to identify relevant stories that contained ethically contentious or questionable practices, actions and behaviours. The ethical self-knowledge and confidence gained through such a process could then be drawn on when negotiating ethical value positions with fellow educators. Furthermore, as outcomes, the personally identified ethical concerns embedded in such stories might be shared to initiate dialogue and discussion. This strategy could serve to resolve or address the issue of potential intimidation by parties on either side of the growing divide of those who see the need for change and those who do not.

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<sup>28</sup> In theatrical discourse a ‘stand in’ refers to someone who temporarily takes the place of an actor or performer who is unable to perform or rehearse due to absence.

As an effective alternative to enforcing a rigid code of conduct or code of ethics, Curtis (in van Nuland 2009: 21) proffers an approach of “raising personal and collective consciousness”. This assisted with simplifying my articulation of the evolving ‘golden thread’ detailed above:

1. If educators were to begin by reviewing their personal *resources* by means of a rigorous process of ethical self enquiry, the result might be a raising of *personal* consciousness.
2. Sharing the outcomes of such a process of ethical self enquiry might contribute to raising *collective consciousness* in the field of Drama, Theatre and Performance education at tertiary level, and perhaps also in the industry for which students are trained.

#### 1.5.4 A ‘guiding’ question to launch a *process* of ethical self enquiry

In response to ‘The Memo’, the process of ethical self enquiry I describe in the narrative to come is geared towards preliminary or ‘pre-performance’ work educators might do in order to prepare for entering into negotiation, dialogue or discussion with other educators. It foregrounds the value of conscientising personal ethical value positions and emphasises the role personal *resources* may play in contributing to the discussion of ethical concerns in Drama, Theatre and Performance education.

In keeping with this, if an educator underwent a process of ethical self enquiry, what guiding question would provide a suitable impulse to ‘launch’ the investigation/exploration?

***Based on my personal experiences as a student, professional within the industry, and educator: what ethical territories and considerations might need to be addressed within the unique culture and context of Drama, Theatre and Performance education at tertiary institutional level?***<sup>29</sup>

Contemplation of this question revealed a number of challenges. Each of these challenges might be framed as further navigational co-ordinates or guiding questions. These questions provided points of

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<sup>29</sup> This question served as a catalyst and offered a point of reference, impulse and direction, assisting me to adjust my trajectory in order to stay on track as my research process unfolded. However, owing to the nature of the research methodologies I employed, and the ethical maturation curve I underwent as the study evolved, I came to ‘question my question’. In Chapter 9 I will share developments that led me to critique the validity, relevance and articulation of my research question. In time I came to view it as a ‘guiding’ question. At various times I contemplated changing my research question (Prigge 2014b). However, the process of questioning it became an important part of my enquiry and it kept playing the role of catalyst. I also found that my understanding and interpretation of “territories” and “considerations” continually evolved. In the first phase of research my focus was on seeking particular ethical concerns embedded within my historical experience. However, as I focussed more and more intently on the particular, I found that a counter-current was simultaneously pulling me towards more universal issues that I could not ignore because they were foundational, and many of the specific ethical concerns I had identified could be attributed in one way or another to them.

reference, impulse and direction and assisted me to adjust my trajectory and to stay on track as my enquiry progressed:

1. *Can I devise means/devices/methods to conduct a thorough appraisal of my own embodied experiences pertaining to potentially unethical practices and behaviours as a student, professional in the industry and educator in the field of Drama, Theatre and Performance?*
2. *How might I model a preparatory process of ethical self enquiry that might serve as a demonstration for and evocation to others tasked/faced with building sound ethical practices in Drama, Theatre and Performance education?*
3. *How can I (or others) extract, interpret and communicate personal experiences in an ethical way and in a manner that might be more generally useful?*

#### 1.5.5 Choosing which grounds to fish: taking aim

I present the following aims distinctly in the present tense, which means that as I perform this narrative I will endeavour to recount my experiences in a manner that addresses them:

1. *I aim to demonstrate how a process of ethical self enquiry might be creatively approached and rigorously engaged.*
2. *I aim to foreground the value inherent in conscientising personal ethical value positions, and demonstrate the value of exploring, utilising and drawing on personal 'resources' in the context of approaching the discussion of ethical concerns in drama, theatre and performance education.*
3. *I aim to contribute to existing research concerning ethics in drama, theatre and performance education from the 'inside' by exploring how a process of ethical self enquiry may be used to generate narratives containing personally identified ethical territories and considerations that may need to be addressed.*
4. *I aim to encourage autonomous moral agency through demonstrating and critically reflecting on a self motivated process of ethical self enquiry.*
5. *I aim to demonstrate and encourage a practice of ongoing and conscientious professional and personal ethical self enquiry.*

## 1.6 Casting the net: research phases and emergent practices

Research was conducted in 3 distinct phases. For all of these phases I would describe my overarching research strategy as being largely intuitive and reliant on emergent research practices<sup>30</sup> versus methods. Sinner et al. describe such research as “unfolding with select sources that often redirect the research agenda toward a more spontaneous, perhaps intuitive reflexivity” (2006: 1245-1246). They refer to the words of Salvio (cited in Van Halen-Faber and Diamond 2002: 259) to position such research “practices” as “the artist’s way [...] of looking at what turns up from beneath, that of involuntary wondering or ‘epiphanic’ memoir [...] that produces ‘a genuine shift of consciousness that alters one’s sense of being’” (2006: 1246). In such research practices, “[i]nterpretations emerge from inquiry, as a researcher explores, assesses, or develops relationships between theories, concepts, and lived experiences” (Sinner et al. 2006: 1249).

### 1.6.1 A *Process* of Ethical Self Enquiry - or Trawling Phase 1

In this study I will describe a process of ethical self enquiry I underwent, as well as critically reflect on it. For this reason I refer to the *process* of ethical self enquiry as the first phase of research, or Trawling Phase 1.

This phase of research was centred on using a diversity of creative practices and improvisational devices to re-search, extract, and make sense of my own lived/embodied experiences of ethically questionable practices and behaviours in performance and its education. The experiences I ‘trawled’ and critically reviewed included: direct personal actions and interactions; observations of, and conversations with peers/colleagues about, the experiences of others; gossip<sup>31</sup>; and myths/legends (in the sense of memes that have been perpetuated and reinforced to the extent that they have become embedded in my discourse, thinking and practice, and also I would suggest, within the broader organisational habitus of performance and its education).

I bedded my research process on the understanding that my personal experiences as a student, professional and educator (and I would thus speculate the personal experiences of any educator in the field) constitute a wealth of valuable intuitive insights or tacit knowledge; and that these *resources* can be tapped to serve as a starting point. I also began with the understanding and confidence that as an

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<sup>30</sup> “Sources of information and ideas in arts-based dissertations often come from specific *practices* within the arts themselves” (Sinner et al. 2006: 1242). Emphasis added.

<sup>31</sup> Matousek (2011: 81) references Psychologist Jonathan Haidt as proposing that “gossip is our first line of defence before violence in the exertion of social control”. He goes on to suggest that “as a moral controlling device,” gossip “allows us to save face and cast aspersions on others. We are not autonomously moral beings, after all. The more closely people live together, the more they care; the more they care, the more they gossip; and the more they gossip, the more language can serve its ethical function” (2011: 81).

artist and educator I have at my disposal certain creative *resources* (techniques, tools, practices) that can be drawn on to engage with an enquiry into personal and more general ethics. I believe that most, if not all, performance educators are custodians of *resources* (historical ethical experiences and creative tools/techniques) they have accrued in the course of their own practice and which they might be able to put to beneficial use in this regard. As artists and educators I believe we should rely on our strengths, sensitivities and sensibilities when approaching ethics, to find a means of engagement as natural and organic as possible and to increase our interest, curiosity and sense of ‘(serious) play’. What tools do we have in our creative repertoire that we can immediately and naturally put to good use? For instance: sensory acuity and perceptiveness, well developed imaginative faculties and visualisation skills, creative improvisation and role play skills, character development skills, interpersonal skills, communication skills, narrative skills, a sound understanding of *physis* or “human nature” (McKeon 1968: 109), and self-observation skills.

I did not sit down to make a list of the creative *resources* I possessed prior to beginning my study, nor did I decide beforehand what I was going to do although I can definitely see the value in such an approach. Rather, I began with leads and impulses, gut feelings and scents-of-a-trail, and then drew on whatever *resources* and tools I had at my disposal to investigate and explore further. As part of my personal investigation process I also reviewed and revisited personal journals I have kept over the past two decades, poetry I have written to express feelings at various critical moments in my life, and I re-read an unpublished book (which is in large part a para-theatrical performance training curriculum) I wrote in 2005 entitled *ACTivation: Playing Your Self*.

The specific practices I engaged were<sup>32</sup>:

- 1. Memory:** investigating memories of specific incidents and events in past experience that I believed held insight into unethical or ethically contentious practices and behaviours on the part of myself and/or others (spanning 22 years of practice and training in a diversity of contexts and roles).
- 2. Journaling:** keeping a dynamic account or ‘living record’ of my process of ethical self enquiry specific to the duration of this study in an *Ethics Evolution Journal*.
- 3. Self-interview:** devising and completing a *Personal Ethics Questionnaire*.
- 4. Narrative enquiry:** creating a *Narrative of Personal Ethics* to explore the development and intersection of the three key strands in my life history this study draws together, namely: *performance*, *education* and *ethics*.
- 5. Fiction:** using the outcomes of the practices listed above (raw material in the form of themes and ideas pertaining to ethically contentious practices and behaviours which were extracted by means of

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<sup>32</sup> These practices are explored in Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 respectively.

narrative analysis<sup>33</sup>) and interpreting them artistically by translating/transforming them into *Parables*<sup>34</sup> (hypothetical case-studies or ‘what if’ scenarios).

#### 1.6.2 Creative impulse #2: discover what you know and trust that you know it

Having engaged in the necessary and required literary research or a ‘testing of the waters’ to validate and motivate this study in my research proposal, the first creative/intuitive research strategy I implemented when I began my process of ethical self enquiry or Trawling Phase 1, was to make a deliberate and definite decision to *refrain from further exposure* to the ideas and understandings, insights and ‘wisdom’, of others. This pertained to dialogue with others regarding ethical concerns as well as literary research. It was my intention to thoroughly ‘trawl’ my own history and understandings as a primary point of departure.

Self enquiry is hereby situated as ‘self study of the self by the self’ (Prigge 2010). The ethical self enquiry process which will be described in the chapters to come is designed to initiate individuals in their own personal ethos and prepare them in advance of negotiating ethical value positions or engaging dialogue regarding ethical concerns with fellow educators (such as at a formal meeting to discuss the creation and implementation of ethical codes and frameworks described in ‘The Memo’ previously).

I set out to discover what I intuitively know and feel about ethics in performance and its education based on my lived experience. I wanted to do so in a manner that was as direct and uninfluenced as I could possibly hope to achieve. This strategy of discovering what I innately know and believe as a decidedly subjective point of departure implied trusting my *tacit* knowledge. It was guided by a deep intuition that as human beings we are ethical by nature. It is natural for us to seek to frame our

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<sup>33</sup> The narratives generated by the various practices employed in this study might be described as a combination of Event-centred (particular past experiences) and Experience-centred (more broad experiences of the researcher/writer including distant events, rumours overheard, segments of life-history etc.) narratives, owing to the fact that the distinctions between these two modes of representation are inherently blurred and “porous” (Andrews et al. 2013: 5). The narratives predominantly yielded discontinuous fragments which is common to studies where there is a prevalence of complex relations (Browning and Boudès 2005: 33, Snowden 2009: 1). Such an understanding of narrative favours a more postmodern or poststructuralist view that promotes a decentralisation of the self, where coherency is not contained by temporal order and consistency, but where human subjectivity may be represented in forms that are “diverse, fragmented, contradictory and open” (Loots et al. in Andrews et al. 2013: 109). This perspective (Reissman 2012: 701) approaches narrative as performance; as narrative-in-context. Furthermore, the narrating self in such an approach is composed of a “dynamic multiplicity of (voiced) positions” (Hermans 2004 in Andrews et al. 2013: 109) that accounts for the “actual”, the “remembered” and the “imagined”; and where the “I” fluidly relocates in accordance with changes in “situation and time” (Andrews et al. 2013: 109). Despite such multiplicity, discontinuity and fragmentation, the unifying force or ‘golden thread’ that does run through all of these narratives is in fact the ethical ‘themes’ they were designed to target and generate.

<sup>34</sup> I am indebted to my supervisor for the suggestion of referring to the hypothetical case studies or fictionalised narratives as *Parables*. Originally I intended to tell my own stories directly. The shift to using fiction as an alternative had a distinctly ethical motivation and was a critical development in the evolution of this *Performed Narrative* and this enquiry as a whole. This will be detailed in Chapters 6 and 9.



experiences and seek solutions to life problems by making choices based on ‘right’ versus ‘wrong’ evaluations. Obviously ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ need to be defined and framed clearly, and in large part such definition is what ethics as a discipline is all about. Mutually agreed upon definitions of right and wrong, moral and immoral, ethical and unethical must certainly be agreed upon by a group tasked with developing ethical codes. But before seeking to understand what others view as right and wrong I wanted to begin from a place that I feel any human being and thus educator can and (I would suggest) *should* begin from: a *felt* and embodied sense of right and wrong<sup>35</sup>.

While everyone may be navigating life according to an implicit ethical guidance system, this system may not be conscious, and so one of my primary objectives was to attempt to clearly define and articulate, thus conscientise, my personal ethos. This has to do with honouring a sense of personal sovereignty as an affirmation and acknowledgement of personal integrity and self worth. To retain a clear sense of moral or ethical character when confronted with opposing views, or in the presence of superiors and those with forceful opinions may not be easy. I thus deliberately created a relatively safe space in which I could identify what I *personally* felt to be ethical concerns as a means to observing my personal ethos in action. This strategy granted me a freedom to play and explore that I don’t feel would have been possible had I thrown myself directly into extensive research of existing literature and immediately exposed myself to the views of others. Once I had completed my process of ethical self enquiry and I began reflecting on it and reviewing literature in the following phase, I recognised something I have known for some time about myself - *I am easily influenced*.

Having a clear sense of what I stand for before entering a space where I would inevitably be confronted with the persuasive views of others would hopefully arm me, and I speculate other educators too if they undertook a similar enquiry, with a few important observations/realisations:

1. You have a right to your own ethical/moral views; even if these may need to be negotiated in a group context and/or be accommodating of group or cultural ethical considerations.
2. Because of your lived experience as a person and professional, you have value to offer; and as you become more conscious of it, you can wield it more appropriately/effectively.
3. Others have a right to their views and they deserve to be respected; even if these views may require negotiation in order for a context-specific, or shared, ethical stance to be achieved.
4. The lived experiences of others are equally valuable and deserve to be respected.

I held to this strategy of ‘seclusion’ and ‘immersion’ in my personal *resources* (history, experiences and ethical orientations) throughout this first phase of research; thus for the duration of what I refer to as ‘A *Process* of Ethical Self Enquiry’.

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<sup>35</sup> In Trawling Phase 2 I discovered that this is effectively an Intuitive Ethics approach (Hazlitt 2012).



### 1.6.3 Reflecting on ‘A *Process* of Ethical Self Enquiry’ or Trawling Phase 2

The second phase of my research process began when I had completed the ethical self enquiry *process* described in Trawling Phase 1 above. This phase involved revisiting the practices and documentation accrued during my ethical self enquiry process and coupling this simultaneously with a literary review of source material that might grant relevant perspectives and insights into ethical self enquiry<sup>36</sup>.

During this phase I continued to employ what I have described as an intuitive approach to research, which means that I followed gut-impulses, leads and scents-of-a-trail according to where my interest, curiosity and also necessity led me. The result was that research unfolded in a multi-ontological and multi-disciplinary manner. I read into a broad spectrum of disciplines in search of insights, including: ethics in general, ethics in education, the relation of ethics to drama, theatre and performance, theatre studies, sociology, psychology, neuropsychology, neurobiology, biology, evolutionary biology, ethology, psychogenic history, philosophy, art, future consciousness, spirituality and religious studies, organisational studies and personal development. I often found myself seeking support for the ethical self enquiry methods I had engaged in fields removed from the context of performance and its education, and very often in the sciences. Support for such a multi-ontological approach will be touched on again in Chapter Ten where I discuss what I refer to as a ‘paradigm shift’ in human consciousness that unites ethics, education and research. In this new paradigm it is suggested that the artist will increasingly be called upon to practice simultaneously as a scientist, and the scientist as an artist (Ferguson 2005: 121-129). According to Klein:

[T]here can be no categorical distinction between “scientific” and “artistic” research - because the attributes independently modulate a common carrier, namely, the aim for knowledge within research. Artistic research can therefore *also* always be scientific research [...]. For this reason, many artistic research projects are genuinely interdisciplinary, specifically: indisciplinatory [...] (2010: 4)<sup>37</sup>.

Essentially I followed wherever the search for understandings that could assist me to reflect on my *process* of ethical self enquiry (phase one) called me to go. In qualitative research, Holliday (2007: 3) asserts, researchers should engage with their research focus using “whatever means this necessitates”. I found that I searched widely in order to fully understand, appreciate and articulate the nuances of the territories I moved through, so that I might offer relevant observations, metaphors and suggestions for educators who might undertake a similar process. The emphasis did not reside on seeking out support and validation for the ethical concerns my process yielded, nor did it focus on assessing their general validity. Rather it centred on discovering perspectives that would assist me to appraise the utility and relevance of the various practices employed to identify personally perceived concerns within a process of ethical self enquiry. Part of this process also involved seeking out ethical approaches/frameworks

<sup>36</sup> Reflections on this research phase are offered in Chapter 8.

<sup>37</sup> Emphasis in original.

that might support an emphasis on ethical self enquiry, and possibly also be applicable and appropriate and thus best serve, the more general context of performance and its education.

#### 1.6.4 A *Practice* of Ethical Self Enquiry or Trawling Phase 3

The third and final phase of research I define as the *Performed Narrative* as outlined previously<sup>38</sup>. This phase involved the composition, writing and structuring of this dissertation as form of narrative enquiry in its own right. To recall, in keeping with autoethnographic, artistic, arts-based, narrative and performative research methods, this narrowing of the divide between form and content, and the emphasis of process over product, positions this *Performed Narrative* (dissertation) as a *demonstration* and *performance* of a *process* and *practice* of ethical self enquiry. *Practice* in this sense means retaining a sense of ethical self-consciousness in an ongoing and conscientious manner, and in both the professional and personal sense.

### 1.7 Predicting the catch

Although it is not necessarily possible to predict what the outcome (success or failure) or impact of this study might be, I am engaging with a measure of confidence that certain things may be attainable:

1. Offering new research and perspectives on ethical enquiry in drama, theatre and performance education by foregrounding and demonstrating ethical self enquiry.
2. Providing new research and perspectives by proposing methods and exercises that may be useful for educators in drama, theatre and performance education specifically (but also educators in other fields) to draw on when navigating ethics in their daily practice.
3. Furthering the case for utilising methodologies such as Autoethnographic, Performative, Narrative, Artistic and Arts-based Research by demonstrating their applicability within contexts such as the Arts and Humanities, where personal experiences and orientations are often central to research.
4. Furthering the case for utilising performative and artistic approaches in ethical contexts such as ethics education and ethical deliberation.

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<sup>38</sup> Reflections on this research phase will be offered in Chapter 9.

## CHAPTER TWO: Fishing expedition #1: Trawling the banks of embodied memory

This chapter outlines the exploration of *memory* through *Recapitulation* as one of the principle and first research practices I engaged when I embarked on my process of ethical self enquiry (Trawling Phase 1). Owing to the fact that this study is built largely on reviewing *past* personal experience, it is inevitable that most of the research practices rely heavily on the investigation of memory. In this particular instance, the focus resides with *particular or specific* incidents and experiences that might yield insight into ethical concerns in drama, theatre and performance education. It was my intention to work with a subtle calibration here, to access and engage with my memories at a refined level of detail, rather than remain at the level of the general. I was not only seeking out specific moments or events, but also a truthful re-appraisal or re-experiencing of them. My intention was to re-live the experiences accurately and sincerely, in so far as this might be possible to achieve, in order to best understand and thus be empowered to work with them.

To this end I turned to Toltec<sup>39</sup> *Recapitulation*; an existing creative *resource* in my repository of available tools upon which I relied strongly. (To recall, in the previous chapter I proposed that educators should draw on existing *resources* they possess when approaching an exploration of ethics). I used *recapitulation* as a means to excavate my embodied experiences of ethically contentious issues, practices and concerns that I had endured at the hands of others (educators and student peers, and industry professionals such as directors, casting agents, choreographers, producers and fellow performers); as well as to seek a simultaneous healing of energetic damage and inspire forgiveness for what I perceived as questionable behaviour and practices. The intention behind such energetic restoration was that I anticipated from the outset that it would be difficult for me to deal appropriately with various ethical themes that might arise if they were still charged with strong personal feelings - even while such feelings can be considered critical to the process of identifying relevant incidents<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> “The *Toltec Teachings* is the title used by Toltec Théun Mares to reference a vast body of knowledge and practice which is called by many names by various authors and practitioners. According to don Juan Matus in *A Toltec Path* (Eagle Feather 1995: 27) the term Toltec ‘recognizes a connection with at least a strain of the cultures known as Toltec, Mayan, Aztec and other Central American Peoples’. While the *Toltec Teachings* have their origins in ancient shamanic practices of sorcery, what is important to note is that they are a practice in a state of constant reform owing to their concerted drive to transcend the barriers of systems and worldviews in their quest for knowledge. The *Toltec Teachings* might thus be said to be a contemporary system in many respects, as their practice and execution adapts to evolving contemporary needs. The *Toltec Teachings* are ultimately a system for unleashing human potential in the contemporary context, and in this they echo strongly the visions of Grotowski and Artaud for actor training” (Prigge 2010: 3-4).

<sup>40</sup> See Chapter 4, Section 4.2.5, with regard to the role of emotions in ethical problem identification and deliberation.

## 2.1 *Recapitulation: gift of the past, peace of the present, promise of the future*

In my Masters thesis *The Toltec Teachings and Performance Training: Complementary Practices of Investigation* (2010), I shared the potential compatibility and applicability of various Toltec techniques with regard to performance training. *Recapitulation* was one of the techniques I outlined in some detail (Prigge 2010: 139-151) and I established significant congruence or complementarity with memory recall techniques utilised in performance training. In short, *recapitulation* is a means to access memory at a cellular or embodied level versus simply at a cognitive or intellectual level; it works fundamentally at the substrate of energy in order to recall “the absolute truth of all life experiences” (Prigge 2010: 145). It is described as a means to restore energy either lost or gained resulting from “antienergetic” interactions or “energetic exchanges” with others under conditions of trauma or extreme duress (Prigge 2010: 145).

At present, we are basically the result of those exchanges. Energetic exchanges were printed in our energetic body, and we live the way we live, we see the world we see, and we are what we are because of those exchanges and their energetic prints (Sanchez 2001: 20).

*Recapitulation* is most acutely aligned with feeling rather than thought and it is something that the body does versus the mind; as I suggested in my Masters thesis, it is thus congruent with Grotowski’s understanding of “body memory” which emphasises the body and the unconscious over Stanislavsky’s “emotion memory” which seeks to harness the conscious as a means to access memory (Prigge 2010: 143).

Toltec *recapitulation* does not take place in the mind, it is an *actual* experience in an altered state of consciousness (or put differently: the accessing of an alternative reality) where the past is experienced as actually happening again, as reality once more (Prigge 2010: 143-144).

In 2005 I conducted a formal *recapitulation* of my life narrative or personal history. After gathering significant events of energetic exchange from my past into a list or inventory, I sat for a fortnight (10:00 p.m. every night until dawn the next day) in a wooden box<sup>41</sup> I had built expressly for this purpose, and systematically, with the aid of prescribed breathing techniques (Sanchez 2001: 146-152), worked through each item I had identified. At this time a number of the experiences I recapitulated had to do with heightened moments of energetic exchange and/or damage I sensed I had sustained during my education and career in performance. This work provided an instrumental impetus toward

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<sup>41</sup> “Sanchez (2001: 109-110) advocates the use of a box for conducting recapitulation because ‘the box creates a non-ordinary (extra-daily) atmosphere akin to being in a cave; the box limits distractions; the box becomes ‘impregnated’ with energy the more work is done within it, thus heightening results; the energy body becomes ‘compressed’ and this assists the body in remembering; the ritual burning of the box at the end of *recapitulation* is a symbolic act of transcendence’” (Prigge 2010: 204).

interrogating ethics in my own practice as an educator, and also contributed to the momentum which has finally culminated in this study.

For the purposes of preparing for this study, I revisited many of the issues I had previously identified as a starting point. I then began to add to this inventory events I had not previously accounted for, as well as more recent events (2005 - 2013) through explorations of conventional memory. I looked both for events where I felt I had gained energy at the expense of others, or lost it due to their treatment of me. I realised that my earlier work had focussed largely on exchanges where I felt I had ‘lost energy’ or been the ‘victim’, and so I began to pay closer attention to circumstances where I may in fact have been the perpetrator - either consciously or unconsciously inflicting damage on or violating the integrity of others (for example, students or cast members in productions I had directed or choreographed, fellow performers and colleagues). I focussed on moments of shaming, embarrassment, discrimination, injustice and favouritism; moments where there was a lack of respect and empathy for the self and/or other; moments where my behaviour or that of others lacked integrity, transparency or honesty; moments where I or others had acted in ways that were not virtuous or lacked sound judgement<sup>42</sup>.

I deconstructed this list into several sub-sections, identifying experiences in which I felt I had:

1. been the victim of abuse or mistreatment as a student;
2. acted unethically as a student;
3. been the victim of abuse or mistreatment as a professional (performer, choreographer, director);
4. acted unethically as a professional (performer, choreographer, director);
5. been the victim of abuse or mistreatment as an educator;
6. acted unethically as an educator.

I began this inventory in what I came to call my *Recapitulation Journal* (Prigge 2014a) in Sept 2013 and worked on it until such time as I felt I was ready to recapitulate in late February 2014. This inventory might well have sufficed as a reflection of my past experience. However, conventional memory can be described as fickle and inaccurate. My previous experiences with *recapitulation* have proved this to me directly. According to the Toltec model, we do not remember things the way they really happened; in order to create a continuity of ego identity, we manipulate memories to conform to a desired version of who we wish to be rather than recalling the truth of events (Sanchez 2001: 28). We also have in-built mechanisms that suppress or deny memories that are extremely painful or that

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<sup>42</sup> This process led me to include a question in the *Personal Ethics Questionnaire* that I developed for this study as a means to better understand and identify the signals or cues used to isolate ‘ethically contentious’ issues. See Addendum 1, question 37.

do not fit in easily with our desired image of self. This, the Toltecs suggest, results in a splitting or fragmentation into self and ‘other’ and a large part of our “dual nature” becomes unavailable to the conscious mind (Prigge 2010: 145). *Recapitulation* is a process of restoring wholeness by re-integrating the ‘other’ unknown (forgotten or suppressed - unconscious) self with the known self (ego identity). So, while this initial list may to some extent have been sufficient to answer my guiding research question, I wished to enter the territory more deeply and try to gain a more accurate reflection of events as they might truly have transpired. I also wished to gain access to memories that might not be accessible to the conscious mind through intellectual recall only.

I did not conduct a formal *recapitulation* in the true Toltec sense as I had done previously (that is, building a box, sitting through the night without sleeping and practicing the prescribed breathing techniques). Instead, I did what I have come to refer to as a ‘light’ *recapitulation*, in search of an alternative that might be more accessible and ‘user-friendly’ for myself and others. I allocated 3-4 hours a day and worked in sessions of sixty to ninety minutes every day for two weeks between February 13 and 29, 2014. I sat in a darkened and secluded room, ensuring there were no distractions such as telephones ringing or intrusions by those who share my space. I worked mostly in the late evening (9:00pm onwards) but also took advantage of opportunities during the day when my schedule permitted and distractions would be minimised.

### 2.1.1 Preparation

- I identified a few key recalled events I wished to explore for each session. I memorised these, and also wrote them down on a piece of paper for easy reference in case I forgot.
- I prepared the space ensuring that it was dark, quiet and free of distractions and intrusions.
- I made myself comfortable in a meditation posture with which I am familiar (sitting cross-legged with my hands resting comfortably on my thighs). This particular posture is not entirely necessary; however, one should aim to feel comfortable enough to remain relatively undistracted by physical discomfort, but not so comfortable that one could be tempted to go to sleep.
- I began each session with a short (5-10 minutes) ‘settling’<sup>43</sup> and centring ritual, in which I used each inhalation of breath to ‘slow down’ and each exhalation to ‘let go’ of tensions in my body. I gradually brought my awareness to a present-centred state of mind-body, drawing on experience I have gathered from practicing *recapitulation* previously and meditation, and also

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<sup>43</sup> In *At Home in the Muddy Water: A Guide to Finding Peace Within Everyday Chaos* (2003), Zen practitioner, teacher and author Ezra Bayda describes “settling down” by using the metaphor of a glass of muddy water. He refers to the muddy water in the glass as our “substitute life” and the process of “settling down” as one of reconnecting with our inner truth - where, by simply being still and “not feeding the agitation”, the mud settles to the bottom of the glass and clarity is attained (2003: 11). What I mean when I say ‘settling’ resonates strongly with this metaphor.

drawing instinctively on techniques from performance training that focus on becoming attuned to the moment.

- As I found myself ‘settling’ into a more meditative state of mind, I began to withdraw my awareness from external sounds and sensations and to enter more deeply into my inner landscape, approaching what meditation practitioners and traditions refer to as “The Great Silence” (OSHO 2004: 11) or “consciousness without an object” (Ferguson 2005: 87). This is a manoeuvre Toltecs describe as “stopping the internal dialogue” (Mares 1997: 157). The state I sought was one which might be described as more open and receptive<sup>44</sup> than usual, more attentive to that which I would not usually notice<sup>45</sup>.
- At this point of the process, I would typically experience the cacophony of thoughts (internal dialogue) running through my mind acutely. For the purposes of meditation I would slowly work towards retracting my focus from these thoughts in search of mental quiet. Simultaneously, for the purposes of *recapitulation* I would feed the busy mind a prompt in the form of the first item on my list for that session.

### 2.1.2 Method

At first I followed a basic 4-stage format of recapitulating each event as per the directions of Toltec Victor Sanchez in *The Toltec Path of Recapitulation* (2001:118) as I was familiar with this procedure from previous work. The following is a re-interpretation of his suggested process with additional insights based on my own experiences:

1. The event is firstly recalled as vividly as possible like a “movie in the mind” (Prigge 2010: 204), as if you are an audience member watching yourself in the scene. This allows for a recall of all of the *mise-en-scène* elements and grants a bigger picture view that prepares one for the second step.

2. Here you enter the scene and effectively try to relive it from your unique perspective. It is important to stress that this process is not simply visual. The objective is to penetrate the scene in such a manner that you actually re-experience it, seeking to connect to nuances such as sounds, touch and sensation, taste and emotions. It has been my experience that if the attention is strong enough and all the imaginative faculties are brought to bear in a focussed manner, the body actually picks up and takes over, it becomes activated, and one is entirely immersed in the experience of ‘being there’ all over again. This is entirely the point and power of Toltec *recapitulation* and it is proposed that this is a

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<sup>44</sup> “Receptivity requires that we inhibit activity in the brain’s occipital region, in the back of the head. In other words, a gate can be dropped, closing off our usual mental chatter so that subtler perceptions can rise to consciousness” (Ferguson 2005: 90).

<sup>45</sup> This is in a sense a “paying attention to our attention itself”, a state in which “[w]e notice the effects of our not having noticed earlier. We notice noticing” (inventor Richard Lang in Ferguson 2005: 91).



natural faculty human beings possess. The body “automatically” does the work; it just needs the right prompt or catalyst (Sanchez 2001: 21)<sup>46</sup>.

3. In the third version of the scene, you again watch the scene from the outside, but whereas in the first step you watched as yourself, and in the second step you were trying to immerse yourself in feeling, your aim now is to remain detached and watch the scene as if the characters in it (yourself included) are strangers. You observe as an ‘outsider’. This objectivity and detachment or ‘non-identification’ has a neutralising, or in Toltec terms a “healing” effect, especially when accompanied by the prescribed breathing techniques. It facilitates an adjustment or restoration of energy (Sanchez 2001: 118). Even without employing the breathing techniques, I have found that having undertaken steps 1 and 2 there is a sense of catharsis or relief which comes from standing aside and recognising that this is a scene from life and *things happen*. It can be liberating to let ‘baggage’ go and move on, to surrender, to forgive, and to release the burden. Removing yourself from attachment to, and identification with, the scene (and thus your ego image) allows for a more universal orientation in which the entire scene becomes part of the grander ‘play of life’.

4. Finally, you consider for a while what you would now do differently were you given the chance to live this moment again. How might you have preferred to behave? With the perspective granted by re-experiencing the scene in 3 different ways: *as yourself watching*, *as yourself in the scene*, and *as a detached or neutral observer* - what would you change about your choices, reactions and actions? Entering again into *recapitulation*, the scene is played out once more and the imagination (infused and ‘charged’ now with the ‘tingles and tremors’ - the sensitivity - of having entered the scene repeatedly) is used to construct or project (or in Toltec Terms “dream” (Sanchez 2001: 118)) the alternative outcome you envision/desire. This becomes an affirmation and guide to future actions that is not only cerebral but has an embodied quality to it. Poor choices and actions or energetic damage are effectively replaced or ‘taped over’ with alternatives, and this results in restored energy and the formation of new meanings and future potentials.

### 2.1.3 Widening the net: ‘*Stepping into another’s shoes*’ through the use of imaginal role play

After the first few sessions of working in this manner, I began to experiment and explore a potential I felt was necessary - at least for my own process. I began adding an additional step into the procedure. Upon completing step 2, I began using performance techniques to repeat this step and play the scene from the perspective of *each* person in the scene, one after the other; to try to see from their orientation, to try to feel how they must have felt, to try to think how they might have been thinking - *and* to try to see myself from *their* perspective (through *their* eyes). When I came to step 4, I also

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<sup>46</sup> As I suggested in my Master’s thesis, it is here that the complementarity of the technique to performance training becomes apparent as a way of investigating personal experience in order to penetrate resource material for character creation/generation (Prigge 2010: 206).

imagined alternatives for *every* ‘actor’ in the scene and not only for myself. I experienced moments of deep connection and empathy for others when I did so; I had a sense of the impact different choices can make; how changing *one* small thing, can sometimes mean changing *everything*. My conscience was deeply activated.

While the original process might have a performative quality in that the steps require the use of the imagination to assist with the activation of the body-memory in order to penetrate an ‘alternative reality’, this additional process of ‘*stepping into another’s shoes*’ that I inserted after step 2 really requires what might be termed ‘acting’ skills. I expect that performance educators would certainly be able to entertain this potential and see value in its suggested inclusion. It makes use of some of the more complex skills in the actor’s toolset to really embrace it on a deep level.

In some instances the insights I gained from these additional steps led me to identifying items to add to my growing inventory of suggested ethical considerations.

#### 2.1.4 On the scent of the trail: using feelings to inspire event recall

Once my first pass of the events on my list had been completed, I took the core feelings that had been evoked - such as shame, guilt, anger, frustration, humiliation and embarrassment - as catalysts to probe my memory more deeply. Again, in sessions of an hour to an hour and a half in length between 4 and 12 March 2014, I isolated myself, ‘settled’ and recapitulated according to a method I have personally devised and used before in self actualisation work. This method seeks to identify patterns in one’s life by asking: “Where have I felt like this before?” as a prompt to a ‘free-flow’ memory exploration. Using a specific event as an impulse to activate and immerse myself in a particular pre-selected feeling or emotion such as shame or embarrassment - I would then release the specific memory (like a space shuttle releasing its booster rockets once it enters space) and enter a state of ‘unfocussed’, or diffuse, attention - an empty space in which I remained receptive and available without expectation. To call this space entirely empty (as per the “no-mind”<sup>47</sup> of Zen meditation, for example) is and is not entirely accurate because you *are* gently holding the isolated feeling in the background or as an undercurrent in

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<sup>47</sup> The “no-mind” of Zen (also referred to as the “open ground”) differs from the Jungian unconscious (Welwood 2000: 74). Clinical Psychologist John Welwood shares an explanation by Zen teacher Hisamatsu Shin-ichi regarding the difference: “The unconscious of psychoanalysis is quite different from the no-mind of Zen. In the unconscious [...] are the *a posteriori* personal unconscious and the *a priori* collective unconscious. They are both unknown to the ego. But the no-mind of Zen is, on the contrary, not only known, but most clearly known [...]. More exactly, it is clearly “self awakening to itself” without separation between knower and the known. No-mind is a state of mind always clearly aware” (2000: 74). My experience of this particular *recapitulation* exercise has been such that I am highly aware of my own awareness, and into this clear space of receptive presence information (memories) arises – as if from my unknown, unconscious aspects of self. My awareness feels like a sensitive net, an almost invisible ‘spider’s web’ spread across an otherwise alive but empty space, and memories are called into this ‘void’ by something that feels like a ‘vacuum effect’ - the subtle intention I hold somehow attracts the memories I am looking for.

a ‘split awareness’ manner - the way a ‘sniffer-dog’ might hold the scent of an object it is presented with in its mind/body as it simultaneously seeks a trail.

Into this empty (or relatively vacant space) memories would ‘spontaneously appear’ from the ether of the unconscious, or burst like bubbles breaking the surface of consciousness. In many instances these were memories of incidents that I had not accessed using conventional memory recall techniques. This technique also has what I would describe as a ‘rolling’ or cascading effect; an accumulating effect that tends to gather momentum and speed. Once the first memory enters the mind (or the trail is found), other like memories begin to follow. The key is to ‘gather’ or collect the memories without fixating on them or engaging with them (that is, thinking about them or observing them too closely) in any way. If you do ‘lock-on’ then this intention breaks the circuitry and the momentum is lost. In such a case you often have to begin all over again with generating the emotion or feeling. Also, because your intention is following the trail and refraining from fixating on each specific memory that arises, and because the memories can eventually interconnect or ‘leap’ from one to the next at significant and increasing speed, it is extremely difficult to recall all of them after the recapitulation session is over. Perhaps this is because the memories are not connected in a sequential timeline - in a linear fashion of A leading to B leading to C - but rather share a feeling tone. A single memory may be preceded or followed by another referring to events separated by years and which occurred in completely different contexts. It has taken me many years of practice to develop a refinement of attention that is able to recall all the memories once a session is concluded. However, simply magnifying, or reconnecting to, the feeling tends to ‘re-spark’ the connections and attract the memories that have been ‘lost’ or forgotten afterwards. I have found that with practice this potential becomes increasingly potent: a single feeling, clearly recalled, can catapult you back into the ‘memory-stream’ once more. If you are struggling to remember you can ‘dip in and out’ at will to retrieve lost items.

I can’t fully explain or account for how this technique works, but I sense it is a form of *Spontaneous* or *Passive Recapitulation* that we are dealing with here. *Spontaneous Recapitulation* as it is understood in the Toltec sense will be discussed in more detail in the section following this one. I can speculate that all memories related to a certain feeling are somehow ‘linked’ in the brain and body; they have a certain ‘tone’ or energetic frequency that relates them, and the mind-body, given the right prompt and focussed intention, seeks patterns or resonances. I sense that here we are working to some extent with memory in both a conscious and embodied form. “When we access a memory”, writes Ferguson, “we trigger a kind of body image” (2005: 99). In a sense then, the technique I am describing is a reverse of this process. In seeking to ‘trigger’ a felt state of being or body image, I am opening a gateway for the mind to ‘attract’ or seek memories associated with this feeling or state that I did not otherwise have access to. Both Ferguson (2001: 99) and Iyengar (2010: 120) offer support from a Western scientific perspective of memory that supports the understanding that memory is predominantly an act of *feeling*. Ferguson explains that research from many disciplines has converged on the possibility that

“feeling is the organizer of thought” (Ferguson 2005: 99). We remember most vividly events that have strong feelings and sensations associated with them. It stands to reason therefore that activating or immersing oneself in feeling might activate a more accurate mental image or cognitive memory.

In a model proposed by psychiatrist William Gray and Systems theorist Paul LaViolette, feelings are combined and recombined like colors on a palette to give form to our concepts. In other words, we recall what we know because of the subtle feelings associated with it. These feelings are like high-lighter pens, marking events as more or less relevant (Ferguson 2005: 99).

In the same way that a performer may seek out specific life experiences in their own history to build the emotions of a character using Stanislavsky’s “emotion memory” technique (1967: 53), here too an individual begins with the emotion in question and then seeks out associated memories. I have no doubt my work as a performer, in conjunction with the recapitulation work I have done, has contributed to the effectiveness of this technique and my ability to practice it. Although this particular process is one I have intuitively developed and used in the past, an analogous explanation or correlate lies in science historian Gerald Holten’s concept of “themata” or felt images (Ferguson 2005: 100). Exploring this lead, Ferguson suggests that Einstein’s ideas began as “vague and diffuse bodily sensations” that finally took form (like “wave forms” settling into coherence) as a *sense* (concept) such as “that the universe is somehow a continuum” (2005: 99). In such a model, she suggests, “memory is chain of nuances” and that “[f]eeling tones glue our experiences together” (2005: 99). To extend this metaphor then, this technique may be a matter of entering the ‘glue’ itself and following it like a river that connects the objects (memories) it holds together.

Often the memories that I accessed as a result of this *recapitulation* practice were far more deeply buried in my unconscious. They were memories associated with hurts I did not want to acknowledge or confront, or instances when I acted so out of character or in such a way that I was extremely ashamed of what I had done. I then captured these events in my *Recapitulation Journal* (Prigge 2014a) and did a more conventional ‘light’ *recapitulation* of them as per the process described in the previous section. Through this process I continued to grow my initial *recapitulation* inventory, adding a vast number of items that I had not recalled while remembering in a conventional manner only.

#### 2.1.5 Passive or Spontaneous *Recapitulation*

In the Toltec tradition, *Passive or Spontaneous Recapitulation* is something that happens at the moment of death (Sanchez 2001: xiii) - the body recalls its lived experiences as the life force (spirit) is discharged and “the human being experiences a second in which their life flashes before their eyes” (Prigge 2010: 140). As I mentioned in my Master’s thesis, this understanding has permeated contemporary ideas regarding life after death owing to accounts given by witnesses of ‘near-death-experiences’ (Prigge 2010: 140) and as it is proposed by spiritual teachers such as Paul Brunton (1959:

92)<sup>48</sup>. Connected to this understanding is the awakening of a higher form of conscience. Brunton describes this process after death in a manner that sheds light on the intentions of *recapitulation* as a form of energetic restoration, healing and forgiveness, as well as the activation and cultivation of empathy and conscience:

During this time [the deceased] comes face to face with the *consequences* for other persons of his acts whilst on earth, consequences of which he was often quite unaware of in which he was often egotistically uninterested. He then perceives that many of his own misfortunes - so vividly depicted again in this amazing panorama - were definitely self-made and self-earned. By this diviner light of a conscience magnified one thousandfold, he *feels* that whatever happened to him was a just result, was traceable in the end to his own character and his own deeds. A great remorse overwhelms him. He puts passion aside and sees the surface "I" as the once-hidden observer sees it, without its own self-flattery and unconscious self-deception. He sees wrong-doing, sin and evil in some of his deeds where, previously, he hardly suspected them even to be present. He also sees other persons, with whom he had come into intimate relation, as they really are too and not as they pretended or as he believed them to be, and thus discovers how he has lived in a make-believe world of his own. Finally he is made to ask himself the question, what have I done with this gift of life? (1959: 93)<sup>49</sup>.

The entire point of Toltec *recapitulation* strives toward achieving this potential while still alive so that life can be lived consciously, fully, ethically and as an act of intelligent co-operation with others. Various aspects of the process engender a 'detachment' or distancing that allow for a transcendence of the ego-bound self, thus activating higher conscience. Viewing events as a detached and neutral 'outsider' fosters this potential. Other aspects call for a converse 'immersion' that allows for the cultivation of empathy. The exercise where I entered recapitulated scenes from the perspective of my 'co-stars' and I experienced events 'from their perspective' granted me a particularly profound sense of awakened empathy for them. When I came to reflect on my *recapitulation* practice this led me to consider the potential that, if approached in the right way *recapitulation* may be a form of ethical or moral education - or a raising *to* and *of* consciousness.

*Spontaneous recapitulation* is not limited only to the moment of death. It can also happen under what Sanchez (2001: 33) refers to as "special" circumstances such as "a nervous breakdown, extreme periods of fasting, long periods without sleep, a deep physical massage, even a physical trauma" (Prigge 2010: 205). Toltec Théun Mares (1995: 204) also references what he terms a memory "jolt" occurring in daily circumstances under the impulse of a smell, taste or a "trigger" such as a "song on the radio" (in Prigge 2010: 205).

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<sup>48</sup> "[T]he "dead" man passes into a state of clairvoyant vision which to him may seem to extend over a few days but is really much less than that by the different standard of our earth-time. There now begins for him the discovery that a mysterious and deeper layer of his mind has kept a secret record of all the multitude of his experiences from prattling childhood to crabbled old age. Nothing has been lost but all still exists there in picture form. He will receive flashing glimpses of most episodes and many details, particularly those which were most intense, of his past life" (Brunton 1959: 92).

<sup>49</sup> Emphases in original.

In July, August and September 2014, when I was in the early stages of *rehearsing* (drafting) this *Performed Narrative* and I was in a very concentrated state of holding a diverse mass of literary ideas from a multitude of sources in concert with my own memories, I experienced bouts of intense *spontaneous recapitulation*. Often tired and mentally stretched, working late at night and then going to bed with an active mind, I experienced several occasions where I was incapable of sleeping. I would find myself recapitulating until dawn. I have no doubt now that the body ‘automatically’ recapitulates under the right prompt or catalyst because here, more than ever before, I experienced this first hand. At first I resisted this ‘intrusion’ because I felt I needed sleep. However, after the first few episodes I surrendered and simply remained in a conscious state of witnessing. In this way I ‘relived’ vast portions of my life as a student, professional performer and educator. The speed of recall and the quantity was staggering. Although on one or two occasions I suffered the following day from immense guilt and shame - feeling overwhelmed at confronting the possibility that I was *not* a ‘good person’, or anger at perceived abuse and injustice - overall I began to feel increasingly, and strangely, invigorated. As these experiences passed through my system and something that I can only describe as ‘beyond my conscious mind’ (such as the ‘energy-body’, I would posit) processed them, I increasingly felt a deep sense of peace and a growing forgiveness for myself and others. Where my research and writing had undeniably held a righteous indignation and fervour previously (even while I consciously made efforts against this tendency), this was supplanted by a growing empathy and sense of mutual or shared endeavour. I appreciated that life is complex beyond our wild imagining, and I am (we all are) doing our best. Such knowing inspires me to want to do better. Using this sense of elevation as an impulse led to the exploration and practice of the improvisation detailed in the next section.

After completing the *recapitulation* processes described thus far, I added spontaneous memories - as they arose in my day to day comings and goings - to my list; although now I only explored them more deeply or in a dedicated way when they offered the potential to broaden the themes of ethical concerns in drama, theatre and performance education which were already beginning to emerge.

#### 2.1.6 Improvisation #1: Life letters to forgive (but not forget)

At various times in my life where I have felt the need to confront or share my feelings with someone, but have not felt that it would necessarily be beneficial or appropriate to do so in person, I have practiced writing a letter to them. I refer to this process as ‘Life-Letters’<sup>50</sup> and included the practice in

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<sup>50</sup> During the course of this study I came across mention educator Kaya Jacolev (2009: 31) makes of a Japanese practice called Naikan, in which you write letters “from the heart” to significant others in one’s life; this seems to resonate strongly with my own ideas. Jacolev suggests that this practice, and also journaling, are “ways in which we can engage in self-reflective communication that can help us rewrite the stories of our lives, promoting ongoing neural integration” (2009: 31-32). Janesick (1999: 519), in describing her use of journaling as a qualitative research technique and practice, outlines a similar tool which she draws from the work of Tristine Rainer (*The New Diary* 1978) called “unsent letters”. This technique is “about writing a letter to someone [...] without any intention of showing it to that person. In a research situation, the researcher may write to one of the participants in the study, for example” (1999: 519).



the process work detailed in *ACTivation: Playing Your Self* (Prigge 2005: 202), the personal development and para-theatrical research method I originated and which in part inspired my Masters thesis. My experience of *recapitulation* is that it most often brings about the desired effect of restoring energy or healing energetic imbalances caused by moments of extreme anti-energetic transfer, resulting in a sense of completion and/or forgiveness; yet this is not always the case. Having completed my *recapitulation* process, I found there were several instances where I was left feeling ill at ease, both in terms of where certain others had treated me poorly and where my own treatment of others lacked integrity.

Seeking deeper integration or harmonisation of these tensions, I wrote several letters to people from my past - including educators, students and industry peers. In some instances this involved expressing myself with regard to the impact their insensitive and/or unethical actions had on me and being honest about my true feelings. In other instances it involved asking for forgiveness of those I may have harmed or affected in like manner. Due to the highly personal nature of these letters and the restrictions guiding ethical research practices, I have not included any of these to serve as examples. However, the *Parable Cindy*<sup>51</sup> provides a good reference or illustration of such a practice.

## **2.2 Reflections on exploring ethically contentious incidents through *Recapitulation* or memory - remembering the past to imagine a better future**

This section includes reflections on my process of exploring memory through *recapitulation*, and marries this with relevant insights and observations gleaned from the literature review conducted during Trawling Phase 2 of my research process. The utility and relevance of memory exploration as a practice will be appraised relative to my process of ethical self enquiry, general ethics, and ethics in performance and its education.

### **2.2.1 Western correlates and support for *recapitulation*, and its relevance to ethical considerations concerning the use of affective memory in drama, theatre and performance education**

While *recapitulation* may have strong correlations with psychoanalysis in that both seek healing through accessing and understanding the past, the difference is marked by the fact that psychoanalysis works on the mind and *recapitulation* works at the level of the ‘energetic body’ (Prigge 2010: 141). Nonetheless, whilst reviewing existing literature on the subject I discovered an alternative understanding and support from a more Western perspective in the work of Psychiatrist Louis Tinnin. Tinnin (1990: 158) describes a therapeutic memory recall technique to regain “lost incidents” which has strong parallels with the Toltec objective of restoring the wholeness/unity of self.

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<sup>51</sup> See Chapter 7, *Parable* 16.



In this model the memory must be recalled in a conscious state, but in order to access it an altered state is required which may be done via mechanisms such as “inquiry into intrusive symptoms, dreams, or flashbacks” or if necessary via “hypnosis or narcosis” (Tinnin 1990: 158)<sup>52</sup>. Once accessed, the memory should be processed in a manner that bears strong correlation to the first step of Toltec *recapitulation*: “The person reviews the memory in the *observer* mode, visualizing the scenes to include an image of the self”. In the observer mode, “the scenes may be visualized as if running a film strip or video, stopping the action at times, running it backwards, attending to incidental details, changing perspective and manipulating the scenes in various ways to gain a feeling of mastery” (Tinnin 1990: 158). (This correlates strongly with steps 3 and 4 of the Toltec process described previously). Only then is the memory accessed in an experiential mode (such as in step 2 of the Toltec process), in which:

[T]he scenes are experienced through the eyes and senses of the self as perceived at the time while simultaneously perceiving and avowing the subjective state of mind extant during that time. This includes tracing the entire temporal course of that state of mind in all of its symptomatic recurrences and intrusions into consciousness (Tinnin 1990: 158).

The outcome is that “memory now comes reworked, verbally symbolized, and, therefore, more easily owned by consciousness” (Tinnin 1990: 158). Bar a revision of the ordering of the steps involved, this approach is almost an exact facsimile of the Toltec model of *recapitulation* and therefore, I propose, goes some way toward enhancing the credibility of the technique and grounding it within a Western scientific sensibility. I would argue for the merit of *recapitulation* in a process of reviewing past experience to extract ethically contentious events because of the potential it holds to expose moments where memories were suppressed or ‘forgotten’ due to dissociative states that often accompany the embodiment of highly charged emotional experiences and/or altered states.

In positioning *recapitulation* as a means to transcend a superficial recounting of experience, I concur with the Toltec view that we don’t generally recall events as they actually happen - we manipulate our memories, to the extent that certain events are entirely edited out. Tinnin (1990: 156) refers to this circumstance as amnesia in service of protecting the unity of identity. During my *recapitulation* process I recalled instances where I had changed certain memories to suit my desired image of self. In *The Created Self: Reinventing Body, Persona, and Spirit* (2000), psychologist Brian Weber describes how we manipulate memory in order to create and maintain a continuity of self which supports the Toltec view. Drawing on William James’ interpretation of Darwin’s idea of natural selection, Weber emphasises the importance of such selection in mental life:

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<sup>52</sup> I would posit that the Toltec breathing techniques (Sanchez 2001: 146) might be described as a mechanism for entering and facilitating access to such an altered state.

Each sense modality is tuned to particular energies or molecules: vision, hearing, touch, smell, taste. For events or objects that simultaneously excite several modalities, consciousness may focus on one more than another. And across time, consciousness prefers some events and emotions over others. The possibility of selection from complex experience affords grist for the interpreting mind. The same event may be seen in multiple ways, the same memory recast in diverse frames of interpretation (2000: 127).

In Weber's description this is facilitated in three ways (2000: 129)<sup>53</sup>: 1. "via the *interpretation* we impose on experience"; 2. "by virtue of which memories we keep or get rid of"; 3. "by choosing the interpretation we impose on already *existing memories*". During the course of *recapitulation* I found myself in the uncomfortable position of having to confront memories in which I had asked students and performers to engage in a variety of 'acts' or experiences that were more a matter of servicing my personal egoic artistic vision than being appropriate or centred on the educative process<sup>54</sup>. I also had to recognise to what extent in my early teaching experience I 'pushed' students to confront their limitations and 'blockages'<sup>55</sup>. While I had not consciously changed my memories, I needed to be reminded of the extent to which my practice was once oriented in such a manner. Over the years I have adjusted my pedagogical approach to being more respectful, sensitive and empathic to the student-performer's situation, becoming more attuned to treating them as a 'whole person' (mind/body/spirit). I discovered that my current 'image/sense' of my practice had become aligned with this shift; almost as if it had *always* been thus (which to my chagrin I had to confess it definitely had not). This recognition of my growth curve (the minding-the-gap referred to in Chapter One) evoked a deeper empathy for other educators whose practices I might now stand in judgement of. I found myself confronted with having to remember where I *started* and where I come from.

During the course of my *recapitulation* process I also encountered several incidents I had completely forgotten. These moments had originally occurred in states of hyper-arousal, onset for the most part due to significant embarrassment and shame, or in some instances as a result of entering into (altered or dissociative) states associated with character creation/generation. These were instances that I could not (or did not want to) recall. The *Parable Trevor*<sup>56</sup> is a particularly pertinent example which contains themes evidencing a great degree of verisimilitude to a past event in which I 'lost time' - acted without being able to recall what I did - and subsequently 'forgot' the entire episode. I was able through *recapitulation* to recall the general event, but still could not access what happened in those moments when I was in the throes of a heightened emotional state. And as per the example of *Trevor*, what happened was potentially extremely dangerous, although fortunately it did not result in any physical harm to self or others. But what of psychological and existential harm?

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<sup>53</sup> Emphases in original.

<sup>54</sup> See *Parables* 9 and 16, and suggested ethical consideration 47 in Chapter 7.

<sup>55</sup> See *Parables* 2, 3, 6, 10, and 16, and suggested ethical considerations 1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 56 in Chapter 7.

<sup>56</sup> See *Parable* 3, and suggested ethical considerations 17 and 22 in Chapter 7.

In *Mental Unity, Altered States of Consciousness and Dissociation* (1990), Tinnin describes how trauma may onset dissociation and altered states of consciousness<sup>57</sup> in which memories are repressed in order to protect the unity of identity. In his paper ‘*Post-Dramatic Stress: Negotiating Vulnerability for Performance*’ (2006), Seton points to this by making reference to Cheryl McFarren’s doctoral dissertation *Acknowledging Trauma/Rethinking Affective Memory: Background, Method, and Challenge for Contemporary Actor Training* (2003). McFarren “interrogates the wisdom and ethics of training techniques that intentionally enable students (consciously or unconsciously) to tap into trauma as a resource for the development and enactment of characterization” (in Seton 2006: 1)<sup>58</sup>. Szlawieniec-Haw’s (2012) paper *Representing Human Suffering, Distress, and/or Violence in Post Secondary Acting Programs* also highlights the dangers inherent in how memory is approached in the context of performance education in particular.

My experience of the use of emotion memory for the generation of characters and emotional states in performance education is that psychological and energetic damage may be recalled and used in a process but that it is not simultaneously or automatically ‘healed’ (understood and integrated). This may increase the deleterious effects of resuscitating buried or dissociated trauma, both short and long term. Not only do I view the Toltec and Western psychotherapeutic approaches to *recapitulation* as ethical self enquiry practices, but owing to their potential to make sense of and heal past hurts, I believe they are a more ethically sound way of engaging with memory in the direct education of acting and performance.

### 2.2.2 Exploring memory (*recapitulation*) as a moral/ethical education practice

Weber positions the power of interpretation as “the Swiss Army Knife of experience, a tool for every occasion and every want, one that helps greatly in the task of creating a self that is somewhat unified across the chaos of experience to which the senses and the flesh are heir” (2000: 143). This is a useful perspective with regard to the fourth step in the *recapitulation* process I engaged where alternative outcomes are envisioned and base memories (lived narratives) become a resource for what might be considered a form of ethical education that may potentially foster moral maturation (a raising *to* consciousness in order to facilitate a raising *of* consciousness). In this way, Weber (2000: 142) suggests, (re-)interpretation becomes a “buffer between the chaos of the world and the deep ordering systems of the mind”. This offers the possibility of catharsis which may ultimately result in an elevation of the function of memory from being totally subjective and irrational, toward a more

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<sup>57</sup> “Altered states of consciousness are conditions in which sensations, perceptions, cognition, and emotions are altered. They are characterized by changes in sensing, perceiving, thinking, and feeling. They modify the relation of the individual to self, body, sense of identity, and the environment of time, space, or other people. They are induced by modifying sensory input, either directly by increasing or decreasing stimulation or alertness, or indirectly by affecting the pathways of the sensory input by somatopsychological factors. As a result, the rules of perception and cognition that cross-cultural psychology has been investigating [...] do not necessarily apply to these states” (Bourguignon 1979 in Tinnin 1990: 155).

<sup>58</sup> See *Parables* 3, 6, and 14, and suggested ethical considerations 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 24, 31 and 35 in Chapter 7.

detached or neutral, and thus universally useful, level (a transcendence of the ego-bound self). Weber turns to Einstein's (1949) commentary on memory to elucidate exactly such potential:

If an individual enjoys well-ordered thoughts [of the physical world], it is quite possible that this side of his nature may grow more pronounced at the cost of other sides [*the personal*] and thus may determine his mentality in increasing degree. [...] [S]uch an individual *in retrospect* sees a uniformly systematic development, whereas the actual experience takes place in kaleidoscopic particular situations. [...] In a man of my type the turning-point of the development lies in the fact that gradually *the major interest [physics] disengages itself to a far-reaching degree from the momentary and the merely personal* and turns toward the striving for a mental grasp of things (in Weber 2000: 132)<sup>59</sup>.

Jonathan Levy (1997) explores the potential that theatre has to stand in its own right as a form of moral instruction. In his essay *Theatre and Moral Education* (1997) he provides a brief historical account of the use of theatre in education more broadly (beginning with the Jesuits in 1540), and then focuses on the moral dimension, and what he refers to as a guiding "intuition" followed by many across the path of centuries of theatre holding the potential to aid the production of a "moral child" (1997: 65-67).

[L]ive theatre was the closest we could get to practice for life; that theatre, like a pilot's simulator, could give a child, in a predictable, compressed, and repeatable form, a preview of the moral dilemmas he or she would encounter in life and practice in living through them correctly and honourably - in short, that theatre might be used as kind of basic training for life, staged battles without live ammunition (Levy 1997: 66).

In terms of moral education Levy distinguishes between 'good' and 'moral' (1997: 68-69). 'Good' may be a basic matter of educating obedience to prescribed virtues and values "by the inculcation of 'known truths' and 'true attitudes'" through a "theatre of propaganda"; this he views as highly possible to achieve successfully as long as the message is clear and received early enough. Educating a 'moral child', however, is a more complex affair. In Levy's view this involves education that transfers or engenders the ability to act correctly in contexts that are *not* prepared in advance of experience; contexts that neither the educator nor the agent is capable of predicting or imagining (1997: 69). Such an orientation is congruent with the theories of both Fesmire (2003) and Haidt and Joseph<sup>60</sup> (2006) and many of the theorists they in turn draw on to support their claims for intuitive, situationist and virtue-based ethics. The development of sound moral character is a process distinct from 'good behaviour' resulting from simply following set injunctions. What manner of theatre might be able to achieve such an education, Levy enquires.

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<sup>59</sup> Emphases in original.

<sup>60</sup> "The child is indeed an active participant in her own development; moral knowledge and skills are not just 'downloaded' into the child's mind, as blank-slate socialization theories would have it" (Haidt and Joseph 2006: 22).

He offers two potentials. The first is that exposure to theatre for both actor and audience can become an experiential resource upon which to draw when faced with real life dilemmas (1997: 69); and the second is that theatre can stand as means to educate the emotions towards deeper empathy and flexibility. The relation this has to *recapitulation*, or the practice of exploring memory in a process of ethical self enquiry, is that he grounds the premise for the first potential on an understanding of memory which, he proposes, becomes layered within the mind over time and forms an archive or a shared repository wherein distinct boundaries between fact and fiction become increasingly blurred. When the need to act or feel in response to a stimulus arises we will instinctively draw on the memory irrespective of where it comes from. This, he feels is possible, even though he admits that the way the memory works “is a mystery” (1997: 70).

To illustrate this intuition he refers to the character of Krapp in Samuel Beckett’s *Krapp’s Last Tape* who grants equal weight to the real and imagined women in his life. In Krapp’s memory, a fictional character is recalled more vividly, with perhaps more of a sense of reality, than some of the real characters that inhabit his world. Another way to think about this is to consider how powerful recurring fantasies can become over time as we play them out again and again in our mindscape. Fantasies can become more consuming and more vividly invested than our everyday life experiences, sometimes eclipsing them for good or ill. The essence of what Levy is aiming to convey here is, I sense, that when we are called to respond to a situation we do not only draw on recalled reality but also on the imaginative; on metaphors, narratives, myths and parables stored in the greater archive of memory. Exposure to the narratives of others and to narratives rich in emotional stimulus (which is undoubtedly the power theatre holds for both actor and audience) is also the primary means of moral education proposed by Haidt and Joseph (2006). Levy’s suggestion nods to their hypothesis but also offers support for the notion that theatre may in fact be a more optimal means of achieving such education than simply reading a story (or parable) from a book, for example.

I would argue that the practice of *recapitulation* I underwent and describe, owing to the richness of the recalled scenes and the diversity of roles explored (as witness/audience and as actor playing a diversity of characters), make it a *performative* experience, which despite differing markedly from a live presentation, nevertheless calls into play many of the faculties, skills, acuties and sensitivities an audience member and/or performer draws on in the presentation and/or reception of a performance.

If memory does work in this way, fiction of all kinds, and theatre in particular, could, and perhaps already does, become the raw data for both moral belief and moral action. I say “theatre particularly” since theatre, for the actor [...] adds body and vocal memory to the film of memory recorded on the mind (Levy 1997: 70).

There is support for the idea that memory does in fact work in the manner Levy suggests. Iyengar (2011: 120) explains how the phenomenon known as “availability” prompts us to draw on memory

according to where our attention is placed, and “priming” (2011: 167) explains how environmental cues can trigger unconscious automatic responses: “Our minds don’t organize information alphabetically or chronologically or by the Dewey decimal system but rather by its web of association to other information”. Iyengar suggests that we can take advantage of this automatic function by creating mnemonic devices when studying for a test or trying to recall where we left a misplaced object. She goes on to say that often memories fire as a result of associative triggers, called “primes”, and that the impact on our mental states is known as “priming” (2011: 167).

“Priming” goes some way to explaining *Passive Recapitulation* described previously. As I reflected on my *recapitulation* process I observed that returning to our past experiences as a student may hold the potential to ‘prime’ us as educators to be more empathic and sensitive to the orientations of our *current* students. Weber (2000: 142) suggests that the interpretive system “[r]econceptualizes events and thereby makes the old new as well as the new old”. Through a recall of ethically contentious or unsound experiences in our own past, we can prime ourselves to hold ethical concerns at the forefront of our awareness or within the field of our attention in the present; and thus stand a better chance to (automatically) behave more ethically. If Levy’s understanding of memory is indeed accurate, then our own memories (our lived narratives), the lived narratives of others we have been exposed to, as well as fictional accounts based on our own experiences or those of others, become equal fodder for spontaneous recall when we are subject to environmental triggers.

I found that simply focussing on ethics during the course of study meant that I experienced spontaneous (passive) *recapitulation* of past experience, and conversely these recollections served to increase my ethical compass and my awareness of ethical concerns within this study and in my current lived experience. I found this process to be a manner of self-fulfilling prophecy, where the more I focussed on ethics in the past, the more the past surfaced *in the present*; ethical concerns I had identified and was exploring in my research became more obvious and attracted my attention more easily within current practice. *Recapitulation*, or any form of diligently investigating memory, may enhance selective cuing, the process of perceiving most readily that which is top of mind. Thus, the more we handle or work with our ethical history, the closer we bring it to the surface of our life where it can serve us in the present.

### 2.2.3 *Recapitulation* and the moral education of empathy through the use of imagination

The process of re-visioning alternative outcomes (*recapitulation* step 4) and the additional step I included of ‘*stepping into another’s shoes*’, called for the use of a combination of memory and imagination (imaginative memory - in which *recapitulation* becomes ‘a theatre of the mind/body’ or *inner* theatre).



Fesmire urges for a “shift in the center [sic] of gravity of ethics from foundational principles to *imagination*” that might recover ethics from its “monochromatic view of moral life” and its “quest for univocal principles and systematic rules”; and instead can develop “textured accounts of ethical enquiry” (2003: 3)<sup>61</sup>. John Dewey positioned the imagination as a tool for what he called “dramatic rehearsal” (which correlates strongly with Levy’s understanding of the role theatre can play in moral education); the playing out of potentials in the mind and through experience to broaden the scope of potential actions and pathways:

Deliberation is a dramatic rehearsal (in imagination) of various competing possible lines of action. [...] [It] is an experiment in finding out what the various lines of possible action are really like. [...] Thought runs ahead and foresees outcomes, and thereby avoids having to await the instruction of actual failure and disaster. An act overtly tried out is irrevocable, its consequences cannot be blotted out. An act tried out in imagination is not final or fatal. It is retrievable (Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* 1922 in Fesmire 2003: 69).

In his model such imaginative processing is not limited only to the mental: a diversity of actions might be required to complete it, such as, for example, getting to know all the facts through appropriate research, speaking to or interviewing various parties involved in an ethical dilemma and so forth. Imagination here is also not the whimsical kind but rather a means to probe deeply into the “hard stuff of the world of physical and social experience” in search of new organizations of ideas and relationships (Fesmire 2003: 66). “It is imbued with sociocultural meanings and rooted in problematic conditions” (Fesmire 2003: 66). Dramatic rehearsal is the reflective part of the deliberation process where there should be “a warm and intimate taking in of the full scope of a situation” (Dewey, *Democracy in Education* 1916 in Fesmire 2003: 66).

There are two recurring ways in which Dewey approached the imagination (Fesmire 2003: 65). The first is *empathetic projection* which concerns the ability to take on the point of view of another person. For Dewey this represented “the animating mold [sic] of moral judgment” (*Ethics* 1932 in Fesmire 2003: 65). This is not to be confused with projecting our own biases onto others but rather sincerely taking their orientation into account. The additional step of ‘*stepping in another’s shoes*’ in the *recapitulation* process I included speaks to such a potential directly. However, although an important and necessary part of the process, Dewey did not see this as sufficient basis upon which to reach an ethical decision (*Ethics* 1932 in Fesmire 2003: 65). The second, *creatively tapping a situation’s possibilities*, was Dewey’s central use of the imagination, and it was as an antidote to habitual, overly reactive, routinised or mechanised deliberation. The purpose of using imagination in this manner is to free perceptions to creatively interact with experience and generate new formations or “expressive objects” (Fesmire 2003: 65).

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<sup>61</sup> Emphasis added.



In *Meeting the ethical challenges of leadership: casting light or shadow* (2012), Craig Johnson also situates moral imagination as the first step in any decision making process. He explains moral imagination as providing the necessary recognition that even the most mundane, ordinary or everyday decisions have an ethical component (2012: 236). Imagination holds the potential to work with the present circumstance but also to magnify it, to reach beyond the known aspects of a situation and tap unknown potentials. I believe that the fourth step in the *recapitulation* process, where one projects alternative outcomes, adroitly addresses and harnesses this potential.

Such imaginative projection also has the potential to invoke empathy. Weber draws a diversity of definitions of empathy together to offer the following summary:

1. *Identification with and understanding of another's situation, feelings and motives.*
2. *The attribution of one's own feelings to an object.*
3. *A very close relationship between persons, especially one resulting in mutual understandings or affection and sympathy* (2000: 158)<sup>62</sup>.

He describes the first kind of empathy as *receptive empathy*, and relates it to the psychological notion of “theory of mind”, the ability to “mind read” or understand the thinking of others (although he favours the term empathy) (2000: 158). Like Dewey, he suggests that the second kind of empathy is *projective empathy* which he describes as the ability to “reach out to others” and project our own feelings into their point of view in order “to check the fit and generality of our own thoughts and to see how they might be experienced through” another’s eyes (2000: 158). Finally, *sympathy* is a “special form of emotional contact” which involves an emotional identification (such as in “I feel your pain”) (2000: 158). Weber believes that the “adaptive value” of the empathy system lies in the fact that we can use these “receptive and projective journeys of the mind” to “become the other person in imagination” and so “test and validate our own thoughts and values” (2000: 159-160). This allows us to re-vision our own identity and persona, adding or subtracting constituent elements of our self-identity. Such adaptive potential is exactly the power I would suggest the processes of *recapitulation* and the imaginative construction of *Parables* or fictionalised narratives<sup>63</sup> hold; they are imaginative mechanisms whereby we may refine our ethical stance and advance our personal process of moral/ethical maturation.

All of these components of empathy contribute to being part of a larger community, as we come to explain and predict the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others. Mature adult empathy, built on innate tendencies, is an act of invention, an important process in the creation of one’s own self-identity and in the building of connection and community (Weber 2000: 160).

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<sup>62</sup> Emphases in original.

<sup>63</sup> See Chapter Six for further exposition regarding the use of fiction as a practice within a process of ethical self enquiry.

Being open to all the nuances of a given circumstance requires a plasticity and flexibility of mind. We tend to stagnate as we age, suggests Matousek, hanging on to old habits “even when they backfire due to changes in the environment” (2011: 54). The imagination is one of the gatekeepers of an open mind, promoting receptivity, productivity and sensitivity. According to Dewey “[a]ny imagination is a sign that impulse is impeded and is groping for utterance” (*Human Nature and Conduct* 1922 in Fesmire 2003: 71). Imagination in this model becomes a pathfinder or an echo-locator, a tool that can grant access where no routes seem immediately or obviously available. It has a *serious play* quality to it, one you might expect in “a game of chess or a jazz quintet”: “[T]he more refined one’s imagination (a function of relevant habits), the richer the fund of germane possibilities and the more reliable one’s valuations” (Fesmire 2003: 71).

Even though the *recapitulation* exercise of ‘stepping into another’s shoes’ was effectively ‘acting’ (albeit imaginal) and thus not necessarily a true representation of the experiences of others, I found this step increased my empathy for others in the scene and gave me an enhanced sense of the overall ethical dynamics and complexity of what had transpired. I experienced an expanded sense of conflicting agendas: human beings trying to make sense of themselves in relation to others, human beings trying to find their way amidst complex choices and desires, wrestling for survival and power, love and acceptance. In instances where I felt I had been energetically damaged or ethically compromised, I had a greater sense of empathy for myself. In some instances I experienced empathy for myself that had been completely lacking previously. As I contemplated this it became apparent that this may have been because I had cut off or repressed self-protective responses in order to fulfil certain practices, roles, improvisations or set tasks in my education and performance career. In these moments of dissociation, suppression and even repression I had ignored/avoided/denied how I was truly feeling and forced myself to ‘put up’ with abusive treatment in order to ‘get on with the job’ or prove myself professional, worthy of success, acceptance or recognition. In some such moments I had allowed others who I considered superior to me to make certain demands of me that were inappropriate in themselves, or in the manner in which they were presented, and my ‘acceptance’ of such treatment was often an act of swallowing my pride or setting aside my personal values out of deference, servility or (often misplaced) respect.

I intuitively sense that much of the dysfunction observers such as Brandfonbrener (1992), Seton (2009) and Szlawieniec-Haw (2012) identify amongst actors and performers (such as addictions, narcissism, poor lifestyle choices and compromised relationships) may be rooted in a form of servility: a willingness to compromise the true values of the self in order to be accepted, recognised, praised and affirmed<sup>64</sup>. As Freiman (2010: 22-23) observes, servility can be immoral if it compromises the ethical character of the self. Stifling moral emotional responses to stimuli in the context of performance and

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<sup>64</sup> See *Parables* 6, 9 and 14, and suggested ethical considerations 11, 25 and 34 in Chapter 7.

its education may be a significant contributor to problems that grow increasingly more advanced and acute as a performer progresses in their career.

I also experienced an expanded understanding of, and empathy for, possible motivations behind the actions of others. In instances where I had consciously or unconsciously harmed others, I saw myself as the perpetrator and experienced acute shame and guilt as well as a tangible sense that my actions had a significant and potentially lasting impact - possibly changing the course of a life forever.

In *Theatre and Ethics* (2009), Ridout explores in some depth the origins of relationship between theatre and ethics. The fact that the question “How should I act?” could be considered from both a theatrical and ethical standpoint motivates his exploration of both how theatre can inform ethics in life, and how ethics can influence our choices regarding how to make theatre (2009: 6). Theatre (like *recapitulation*) has the potential to provide an opportunity for what might be described as an ‘ethical encounter’, the confrontation of ethical issues which may lead to moments of conscience and deeper understanding. One of the most commonly identified ‘powers’ of live theatre is precisely that it supposedly holds the potential to provoke, evoke or invoke sympathy and empathy in the viewer who is witness to the emotional, psychological and existential wrangling and struggles of characters presented on stage. The same applies to actors asked to immerse themselves in the life circumstances of the characters they adopt (Konečni 1991, Akyol 2007, Hogan 2008, Holland 2009, Ridout 2009, Cranston and Kusanovich 2013). Earlier I suggested that the *recapitulation* process I undertook has a strongly performative bent and such could enhance its appeal and applicability to performance educators seeking to engage with it as a part of a process of ethical self enquiry. As Stanislavsky put it (in Konečni 1991: 218): “You can understand a part, sympathize with the person portrayed, and put yourself in his place, so that you will act as he would. That will arouse feelings in the actor that are analogous to those required for the part”.

To recall, the second potential Levy explores for theatre to stand as form of moral education is that it can be used as a “school for feelings” or to “educate the emotions”; something which, to his utter bafflement, education in general somehow completely fails to attempt (1997: 70). To ensure his premise of “educating the emotions” is not misinterpreted, he dismisses out of hand the contemporary emphasis on ‘getting in touch’ with our feelings; which in his view would be the same as mistaking ear cleaning with ear training (1997: 70):

By educating the feelings I mean “educating” them the way we educate anything else - an art historian's eye or a wine-taster's palate, for example: training it to experience more deeply, more vividly, and more fully; to discern distinctions, nuances, suggestions, and intimations not available to the uneducated faculty (1997: 71).

To elucidate on his view of educating the emotions he turns to the work of Joanna Baillie (1762 - 1851), a Scottish playwright who wrote *A Series of Plays: in which it is attempted to delineate the*

*strong passions of the mind. Each passion being a subject of a tragedy and a comedy* (1798 - 1802) (Levy 1997: 71):

I take the kernel of her design to be this: that the best way for human beings to gain self-knowledge about our human feelings is through the exhibition of those feelings, in all their depth, variety, and nuance, in the theatre, the theatre being the best “species of moral writing” for instruction in feeling because of the combination of “the natural desire we have to look into the thoughts, and observe the behavior [sic], of others” and “the sympathetic propensity” - that is, the propensity to feel with others - that all human beings share. Therefore, the theatre, better than any other means, perhaps including actual experience, can educate us in feeling (1997: 72).

Levy understands Baillie’s intentions as striving toward the “liberal” education of emotions which involves their direct expression and experience without censorship or emphasis of some over others. This, he suggests, implies educating them “theatrically”, using every resource the theatre has to transcend reason and stimulate the “unsaid” (1997: 72). He believes that “the nameless faculty” (perhaps the “moral organ”<sup>65</sup> as Matousek describes it) which we intuitively and instinctively apply to moral dilemmas can be enhanced “through the intense and various sympathetic experience theatre, in its fullness, can give” (1997: 72). Moral reasoning can purportedly be developed through education, and so it stands to reason that “moral emotions” (Matousek 2011: 45, Graham et al. 2012)<sup>66</sup> may also to some extent be educable; with the result that moral agents will respond “more humanely” and “morally” than those with uneducated emotions (Levy 1997: 72). Until virtual reality technologies become more advanced, Levy proposes that theatre is the next best way to educate the emotions toward moral artistry (1997: 72). I would argue that the performative nature of the *recapitulation* process makes it a form of ‘virtual reality’; when engaged sincerely and deeply enough it allows one to penetrate an alternative existence in which one’s own, and the actions of others, can be experienced in a textured and nuanced manner. It allows for ‘re-living’ the part one played in historical events and evokes an empathy for the parts played by others.

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<sup>65</sup> We are apparently endowed with what Matousek (2011: 5) refers to as a “moral organ”. It is not a literal entity as such although it is comprised of parts located in different regions of the brain and nervous system which must work in synchrony. The ‘moral organ’ is an “innate faculty similar to our human genius for language, mathematics, and art” (2011: 4). In Matousek’s description this “moral organ” evolved in order to allow our “ultrasocial” species to be able to co-habit relatively peacefully (2011: 5). “Although humans inherit a biological bias that permits us to feel anger, jealousy, selfishness, and envy, we inherit an even stronger tendency toward kindness, compassion, cooperation, enthusiasm, nurture, and love, especially toward those in need” (Matousek 2011: 5). This ‘moral organ’ is described in Moral Foundations Theory (MFT) as having five primary foundations. Moral Foundations Theory - popularised by psychologist Jonathan Haidt - is informed by the findings of evolutionary biologists, sociologists, neuroscientists and psychologists regarding human development (Haidt and Joseph 2004, 2006; Graham et al. 2012). These foundations might be considered basic and innate human values that are not culturally specific but universally shared - albeit in varying degrees of emphasis depending on context. The five moral foundations that have been identified and put forward thus far (Haidt and Joseph 2006: 16-19) are: 1. *Harm/Care*: we have strong moral emotions related to threat and nurturance; 2. *Justice/Fairness*: we have a bias towards reciprocity and equality; 3. *In-group Loyalty*: we favour relations with those within our group and treat outsiders differently/worse; 4. *Authority/Respect*: we tend to create and adhere to power structures and have hierarchies of respect; 5. *Purity/Sacredness*: fuelled by our central ‘moral emotion’ disgust, we tend to aspire toward avoiding contamination, contagion or pollution - whether this is spiritual, physical or psychic.

<sup>66</sup> See Chapter 4, Section 4.2.5, for further exposition regarding moral emotions.

Konečni describes empathy in psychological terms as an “emotion-transfer” mechanism and situates this at the centre of his understanding of Stanislavsky’s work, both for the actor and the audience:

It is very likely that Stanislavski would be in full agreement with the view that a powerful and lasting emotional impact on the audience is perhaps the principal purpose of a theatrical performance and the main source of its aesthetic appeal. He implicitly distinguished between *sympathy* and *empathy*. In *An Actor Prepares*, Stanislavski suggests that while an insulted person may feel anger and a witness would at first only sympathize, this may be transformed into actual anger and direct reaction (empathy). The audience might act as a sounding board, returning genuine emotions (Konečni 1991: 220)<sup>67</sup>.

Yuri Zavadski (1963) observed that Stanislavsky’s emphasis was accessing the “here and now”, and the actor’s capability to embody this present-centredness would situate the audience likewise in the moment (Konečni 1991: 218). They too would ‘live the part’, deliberating and confronting challenging issues and emotions in concert with the actor. While the audience might not engage in “large-scale” physical actions they might respond in synchrony by “clenching their fists” or “grimacing” (Konečni 1991: 221); they “may empathize with an actor and engage in their own emotional-memory activity facilitated by identification” (Konečni 1991: 221). This correlates to steps 1 and 3 of the *recapitulation* process where one watches recalled scenes as an ‘audience member’.

Stanislavsky’s system, creating a high degree of verisimilitude with everyday life, was designed to produce “corresponding emotions” in the audience, Konečni observes. In his view Stanislavsky’s system intuitively anticipated psychological and physiological discoveries: “Put another way, Stanislavski’s system was based on assumptions about human nature that have since been proven scientifically correct” (Konečni 1991: 222).

One of the more recent scientific advancements that links Stanislavsky’s ‘assumptions’ and *recapitulation* is the discovery of Mirror Neurons in 1995 which grants a deeper scientific understanding of how it is possible to ‘step into another’s shoes’ and empathise in the *recapitulation* exercises described, as well as in theatre and performance (and real life in general). Being able to observe our actions ‘through the eyes of another’ so to speak, is what really creates a space for monitoring and adjusting our behaviour and becoming ‘better’ people. To see yourself from the point of view of someone who has suffered harm or injustice by your hand holds significant power to stimulate and foster deeper conscience. We innately have, and make use of, this capacity, but science is beginning to explain how it actually works. Mirror Neurons offer a scientific explanation of how it becomes possible in the *recapitulation* exercise to observe the self ‘as if’ from the vantage of someone else (as one of the ‘co-stars’ in your life scenes being investigated).

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<sup>67</sup> Emphases in original.

#### 2.2.4 Mirror Neurons and the light and dark of ‘character invasion’

While they were undertaking a study of premotor neuron dynamics neuroscientists Giacomo Rizzolatti, Vittorio Gallese and Leonardo Fogassi discovered mirror neurons by “happenstance” (Dobbs 2006: 1). During the study they were monitoring brain activity in macaque monkeys as they were reaching for various objects.

The eureka moment came when Fogassi (as Rizzolatti remembers it) walked into the room where the monkey was and reached out and picked up a raisin. As the monkey watched, its promotor neurons fired just as they had when the monkey had picked up the raisin. The men could hardly believe what they had witnessed: a sort of sympathetic, observation-driven firing of neurons they thought fired only in action. But after replicating that and similar experiments many times, they realized they had discovered something new (Dobbs 2006: 1).

The mirror neuron system in the human brain has been discovered to be vastly more complex than that of a primate. In simple terms, mirror neurons allow us to not only recognise and imitate actions, but to understand their intention and meaning. Whenever we witness an action, the neural firing in the brain of the person who is initiating the action is re-presented or mirrored through sympathetic firing of the same neurons in our own brain. The parts of the brain that light up as we experience an action or emotional state light up in exactly the same way they do when we observe someone else experiencing the same action or emotion (Dobbs 2006: 2, McTaggart 2011: 66, Davis 2012, Frazzetto 2012). The brain effectively does not distinguish between self and other and responds to observed stimuli as if we ourselves are undergoing the experience being witnessed (McTaggart 2011: 66). *“To make sense of the riot of experience around us we can only imagine it by mentally undergoing it ourselves. We understand the actions of others by simulating the entire experience from a personal vantage point, as though it were happening to us”* (2011: 65-66)<sup>68</sup>. This process is not only restricted to observation. If you were to read or listen to a description of a certain action, the mirror neurons associated with performing the action will also fire (Dobbs 2006: 2). Keyzers suggests that mirror neurons break down what were once considered to be clearly demarcated or rigid perceptual boundaries between observer and observed: “During most social interactions there is not a single agent and a single observer [...] [b]oth partners are both observer and agent, both the source and the target of the social contagion the mirror neuron system conveys” (McTaggart 2011: 66).

World renowned neuroscientist V.S. Ramachandran suggests that mirror neurons grant humans the capacity known as “allocentric perspective” which, in more colloquial terms, describes the ability we possess to take on the perspective of another, or to ‘walk in another’s shoes’, versus simply occupying our own egocentric orientation (Matousek 2011: 226). Building on such recognition, psychiatrist and

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<sup>68</sup> Emphases in original.



biobehavioural scientist Marco Iacoboni makes a direct link between mirror neurons and ethics or morality:

A further implication of the recent work on the relationships between mirror neurons, imitation, and empathy is the consideration that the evolutionary process made us wired for empathy. This is a major revision of widely held beliefs. Traditionally, our biology is considered the basis of self-serving individualism, whereas our ideas and our social codes enable us to rise above our neurobiological makeup. The research on mirror neurons, imitation, and empathy, in contrast, tells us that our ability to empathize, a building block of our sociality and morality has been built “bottom up” from relatively simple mechanisms of action production and perception (2009: 666-667).

Ramachandran furthermore suspects that at some point in the history of human evolution mirror neurons “*turned back on us*, allowing us to be aware of ourselves”<sup>69</sup> (Matousek 2011: 226). The ethical implications of such an observation are vast because they gift a scientific basis for the orientation that allows us to self-reflect, to see and judge ourselves as if we were observing from the perspective of *another*.

The discovery of mirror neurons is one which holds tremendous implications for the art of performance and acting (Davis 2012, Frazzetto 2012). For centuries the performer’s social and personal power has centred on the ‘magical’ or ‘mysterious’ ability to transform into ‘other’ (Mansfield 1894, Fowlie 1950, Schyberg and Carlson III 1962, Bates 1987, Frazzetto 2012). This has in many respects been a ‘secret’ of the craft, one which even actor’s withheld from one another:

Stanislavsky regretted this when he set about to write his work about the psychological process involved in the art of acting. ‘Not a single artist will ever betray his secrets. How he works and creates is a mystery which he carries into the grave with him’ (Schyberg and Carlson III 1962: 72).

Mirror neurons go some way toward solving the ‘mystery’ and revealing the ‘secret’. But with such scientific insight comes an increase in responsibility and accountability to manage and navigate the implications. The human capacity to enter into the vantage of another may have positive and negative results: ‘entering’ or “feeling into”<sup>70</sup> characters of poor ethical/moral character may lead to a corruption of moral integrity. Such experiences may become a part of the database of memory Levy points to, and which get called on when making moral decisions and navigating choices. ‘Stepping

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<sup>69</sup> Theorists such as Ramachandran and Arbib believe that the emergence of mirror neurons played a significant role in the development of culture, social skills and human networks because they catalysed the development of language some 5000 to 10 000 years ago: “[a]s more elaborate and abstract communication became possible, information could be spread, built upon, and modified to create the intellectual and social dynamic we call culture” (Dobbs 2006: 2). Emphasis in original.

<sup>70</sup> “German Philosopher Theodor Lipps was the first to use the term empathy (*Einfühlung*, literally ‘feeling into’) in the early twentieth century as a way of describing the relationship between artwork and observer in the psychology of aesthetic experience” (Frazzetto 2012: 466).



into the shoes' of, or empathically mirroring the behaviour of moral/ethical deviants (fictional characters or real others) may also cause ethical dissonance (indecision/confusion) (Freiman 2010).

Seton calls attention to the possibility that educators lack the necessary training to “recognise hyper-arousal and dissociative responses in students or help process traumatic experiences so that these do not leave a harmful residue” (2006: 1)<sup>71</sup>. He goes on to say that “[a]ctors may often prolong addictive, co-dependent and, potentially, destructive habits of the characters they have embodied”<sup>72</sup>. The phenomenon of an onstage character affecting the offstage identity and personality is known as ‘character invasion’ (Burgoyne et al. 1999, Freiman 2010: 15) and it is the cause of many ethical concerns and a “*moral issue*”<sup>73</sup> (Freiman 2010: 16). Burgoyne et al. offer the following by way of example of ‘character invasion’:

One of our own interviewees, Tom, described a moment in an undergraduate rehearsal in which, following an intense exercise, “I could not find any way to maintain a hold on who I was. There was no sense of an ‘I’ as in ‘me, Tom.’ It was all a sense of an ‘I’ as in ‘me, [the character].” Furthermore, Tom found his character's manipulative behavior [sic] carried over into his real life. Additionally, before the first show closed, he went immediately into rehearsal for a second show. Consequently, Tom said, “I was still having a problem finding who I was, so there was no ‘me’ to build the other character from. So I was like three characters all fighting for the same body (1999: 164).

Freiman (2010: 16) suggests that “[a]cting, [...] involves dissonance between one’s private beliefs and one’s public behaviour” and that “similar effects can be produced without even acting against one’s private beliefs - experimental evidence confirms that inducing individuals to simply speak against their beliefs reduces their confidence in those beliefs”.

If social psychologists have proven anything during the last thirty years they have proven that the actions we elect leave a residue inside us. Every time we act, we amplify the underlying tendency. [...] Our traits and attitudes *follow* our behavior [sic] (Myers 1993 in Freiman 2010: 14).

Such potential strongly calls for appropriate briefing and debriefing procedures in drama, theatre and performance education. Seton (2009) also emphasises a need for collaboration with, or the inclusion of, trained psychologists within performance education. In an interview he conducted with Dr. Jane Bacon of the University of Northampton, she suggested the following: “If acting schools are enabling students to do psychological work on themselves [in creating characters] well, then [the acting schools] need therapists and counsellors - much of the work I do is about crossing over when working

<sup>71</sup> See *Parables* 3, 6 and 14, and suggested ethical considerations 15, 16, 17, 19, and 20 in Chapter 7.

<sup>72</sup> See *Parables* 6, 13 and 14, and suggested ethical considerations 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 26 and 27 In Chapter 7.

<sup>73</sup> Emphasis in original.

with creative people and therapy - so how do you do that and do that safely?" (Bacon in Seton 2009: 45)<sup>74</sup>.

As far back as 1894 Richard Mansfield observed the extent to which taking on roles might affect the actor's daily experience:

It is impossible for an actor to attempt an arduous role and having done his full duty to be as unruffled and calm and benign as a May morning. The very centre of his soul has been shaken; he has projected himself by force of will into another being, another sphere, - he has been living, acting, thinking another man's life, and you cannot expect to find him calm and smiling and tolerant of small troubles [...] (1894: 339).

Matousek observes that "[t]he discovery of mirror neurons alone is enough to demolish the myth of a constant, unwavering self. We play different roles throughout our lives. Our roles have different parameters. We adjust the definitions of right and wrong, injecting different characters into different situations" (2011: 109). In his view mirror neurons demonstrate "how surgically alterable, moral identity can be" (2011: 109) and if this is so in daily practice, I would suggest that the implications for performers may be even more pronounced.

#### 2.2.5 *Recapitulation* and the habit of virtue: Mirror Neurons, Hebbian Theory, Neural Plasticity and the development of ethical expertise

Mirror neurons advance the idea that moral education has a valid basis: "Those who rate themselves as highly empathetic typically display more mirror neuron activity. Conversely, as we develop empathy our mirror neuron circuitry develops in complexity, suggesting that the heart of empathy is embodied simulation" (McTaggart 2011: 71). This is related to what is known as 'Hebbian learning'. Donald Hebb recognised in 1949 that neurons which are repeatedly stimulated simultaneously become increasingly efficient and function more and more as a cohesive unit or a learnt 'module'; or as the theory is often summarised: "*Neurons that fire together wire together*" (McTaggart 2011: 65)<sup>75</sup>. This supports my personal speculation that the *recapitulation* process I employed to explore memory may stand as a form of 'dramatic rehearsal' or ethical practice, using the imaginal faculties to envision and re-enforce alternative pathways for action.

While reflectively learnt or practiced heuristics or modules may lack the speed of the automatic system, they can be improved with repetition or rehearsal. This is supported by ethical developmentalist views such as that of psychologist Darcia Narvaez (2010), who suggests that while intuitionist theories do account for initial moral reactions, moral 'expertise' is something that can be

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<sup>74</sup> See suggested ethical consideration 16 in Chapter 7.

<sup>75</sup> Emphasis in original.

developed (in Graham et. al. 2012: 33). “Moral maturity” can result from “conscious deliberation” and repeated efforts become increasingly “automatic” (Narvaez in Graham et. al. 2012: 33).

Such potential is practically evidenced by Paul Ekman<sup>76</sup>, one of the world’s leading psychologists on the emotions. Ekman is possibly most famous as “the human lie detector”, boasting a 95% accuracy rate (Iyengar 2011: 127). He creatively taught himself to be able to detect lies by focussing his attention on the details of micro-expressions with the use of slow motion video tapes. This resulted in the development of what is referred to as “informed intuition” which “combines the speed of reflex with the objective benefits that come from careful consideration and analysis” (Iyengar 2011: 128). Informed intuition is said to require approximately 10 000 hours of practice in a given domain combined with incessant self-scrutiny and observation: rehearsal and feedback (Iyengar 2011: 129). So while we all have the potential to become adept moral artists, much moral imagining, dramatic rehearsal, practical experience, creative analysis, courageous dialogue and feedback are required. I would suggest that an ongoing practice of ethical self enquiry, including the practices of memory exploration (*recapitulation*), journaling and self-interview<sup>77</sup> might support such development; they may especially foster an increase in sensitivity toward, and empathy for, the unique orientations and experiences of others.

Hebbian theory explains how we become increasingly efficient at tasks through rehearsal or practice and this is connected to another important scientific discovery pertaining to ethics and morality: that of Neural Plasticity. Neural Plasticity describes the potential for the brain to be affected and moulded by the environment and experience (Nelson 1999: 42). The discovery of the brain’s ability to change throughout the lifespan has undermined the previously held notion pervading 20<sup>th</sup> century thought that “the adult human brain is fully developed, organized in fixed and immutable function-specific neural circuits” (Rees 2010: 150). According to anthropologist Tobias Rees recent discoveries render the ‘innate’ versus ‘learned’ or ‘nature’ versus ‘nurture’ debate “fallacious” (2010: 43-44). This “shattering” of previously held notions of “cerebral fixity” Rees contends, has freed humanity from certain dictates by science regarding the ethical question of how life ‘ought’ to be lived (2010: 155).

The ethical consequences of this emergence are quite profound: Human beings cease to be fixed and immutable machines, cease to be already wired information processing computers of sorts. With this cessation, a large part of the ethical repertoire that had been assembled in the course of more than a century of neuroscientific work becomes marginalized. The language of wires, of switching boards, of computers, of programs - once so central to thinking the human, to making sense of oneself and of one’s experiences - does not apply to a brain that is understood to be a living organ, part of an organism that is in a constant interplay with a milieu to which it needs to adapt continuously. It is replaced by talk about growth, induction, differentiation,

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<sup>76</sup> Ekman’s work on the relation between facial expressions was studied and explored in the development of the non-invasive acting technique *Alba Emoting* (Bloch 1993), and his work has been drawn on extensively in ethics research (Graham et. al 2012).

<sup>77</sup> The practices of journaling and self-interview will be discussed in chapters to follow.

proliferation, flexibility, morphogenesis, adaptation, individuation (Rees 2010: 157-158).

We are not only able to change our minds in the sense of altering our viewpoint: we can actually change our neurological wiring, effectively changing who we know and experience ourselves to be. We can change not only what we think, but *how*. This holds tremendous scope with regard to contentious debates about whether ethics can in fact be taught or not. Neural plasticity suggests that they can. Values can be learnt and virtues can too - with practice, or the cultivation of habit resulting in “virtuosity”, as Aristotle and Confucius, each in their own way, suggested so long ago (Haidt and Joseph 2006: 2).

The moral virtues, then, are produced in us neither by nature or against nature. Nature, indeed, prepares in us the ground for their reception, but their complete formation is the product of habit (Aristotle in Levy 1997: 65).

With regard to the idea of raising consciousness as a form of ethical development, Siegel (2006) suggests that the basic steps linking consciousness with neural plasticity unfold as follows: “Where attention goes, neural firing occurs. And where neurons fire, new connections can be made” (cited in Callahan 2007: 4). We can learn to think ethically, but the key lies in practice, in experience: “Experience creates the activation or ‘firing’ of neurons. This neuronal activation can in turn lead to alterations in the connections among neurons, the basis of neural plasticity” (Siegel in Callahan 2007: 7). “Changing habits changes our brains. And changing our brains changes our habits” (Matousek 2011: 53). Armed with imaginative visions we can widen our repertoire to include novel and increasingly expansive modes of operation. New ‘characters to play’ become available to us. If we choose to adopt those with a high degree of integrity and virtue, then in taking them on we can mould our character and increase our ‘virtuosity’ as moral life artists and thus ethical teachers. But this potential also signals a need for caution when it comes to entering into characters of dubious moral fibre, and thinking and feeling as they do for prolonged periods of time. Neural plasticity can lead to developing habituated vices as well as virtues. And this is not to say that performers should refrain from playing such characters or drawing on traumatic memory as a resource in their work; theatre and acting would be impoverished and there would be no ‘drama’ without them. Like Seton:

I am not advocating the removal of stress and trauma or the diminishing of intentional vulnerability. I acknowledge that stress, trauma and vulnerability, in sustainable measure, are inevitable and integral to embodied life and performance (2006: 3).

The key, however, lies in expanding consciousness to become increasingly aware of, and able to manage, the risks at all times.

### 2.3 Gathering in the net: Memory (*recapitulation*) as an ethical self enquiry practice

The *recapitulation* exercises I engaged call for detailed emotion memory and ask for availability to experiencing a wide range of emotional states. In *recapitulation* you are at once the audience and the actor and are exposed to a diversity of perspectives offering the opportunity for the revelation of prejudices and ‘noticing your own noticing’ (that is, what you don’t usually pay attention to) (Lang in Ferguson 2005:91); this increases the range and scope of your ethical repertoire and trains moral emotions and moral imagination.

What *recapitulation* truly reveals for me is just how critical memory, emotions and the imagination are to moral or ethical life. The imagination is a part of the human repertoire that distinguishes us from other life forms, and is definitely a creative *resource* performance educators (as artists) have at their disposal. It allows us to develop and exercise a number of critical moral skills, including the virtue of patience without which, Matousek notes, we simply cannot be moral (2011: 51). Levy suggests that while he expects that educating the emotions may produce better deliberators on moral issues, he is less sure as to whether it would necessarily produce better moral actors. However, he has an “inkling” that there exists a “millisecond of neural static” between emotional understanding and action or between stimulus and response that might be taken advantage of if investigated more deeply (1997:73). This “neural millisecond” exists, at least in my understanding, as the bridge between the automatic and reflective systems; and if the theory of ‘informed intuition’ is indeed valid, then his “hunch” may be closer to truth than speculation (1997:73). By increasing the gap between impulse and reaction, by inhibiting our prejudiced knee-jerk responses, we stand an opportunity to expand our potential for empathic connection and projection; and thus to promote ethical maturation and the development of moral/ethical expertise.

In the imagination we can stand aside, view the bigger picture, and occupy different points of view - those of real and hypothetical others. Through use of the imagination we are capable of harnessing the power of neural plasticity; we can envision ways of behaving that deviate from our habits. During the course of research, neural plasticity became for me a beacon for the potential we have for moral maturation and it also offered support for the ‘dramatic rehearsal’ implied in the process of *recapitulation* and the formulating of the *Parables* which are presented in Chapter Seven.

In order to understand how it is possible to step into the perspective of another (in imagination, performance and in creative writing) and take on an empathic view (albeit imaginal) of their experience, I found a great deal of insight in coming to understand the mirror neuron system. As I worked I had a growing sense that remembering and imagining with an ‘ethical focus’ may be a form of ethical training or education; a way to increase one’s knowledge of self and others as well as one’s ethical capability and understanding. While my original sense was that gathering my memories would

be largely a matter of raising *to* consciousness ethical concerns, as I worked I recognised that this practice in itself, if engaged sincerely and deeply enough, may also potentially constitute a raising *of* consciousness. In a sense these explorations of lived/embodied memories become ethical case (self) studies in their own right.

Citing O' Toole (2009), Cranston and Kusanovich (2013: 49) suggest that empathy begins the moment we attain a "felt sense" of what it might be like to inhabit the orientation of another person; they also promote the value of exploring theatrical ways of approaching ethics because of the power performance practices hold for granting us "a fuller picture of human frailty and strength" (Cranston and Kusanovich 2013: 29) in which we "judge our behavior [sic] in the guise of an imaginary 'spectator' within us", and furthermore "see others in light of our own creative imaginings of being them" (Ridout 2009: 33). I believe the performative nature of the *recapitulation* exercises I engaged highlights this potential. Along similar lines Courtney (1988: 125) proposes that '*stepping into another's shoes*' "allows us to understand the Other through the Self and the Self through the Other - and the resulting meaning is greater than either" (1988: 125). In *recapitulation*, replaying 'lived scenes' creates the potential to observe the self from multiple points of view and thus to expand our (ethical) self-knowledge and our sense of empathy for, and understanding of, others with whom we interact in complex relations. Courtney (1988: 125) goes on to suggest that "when we represent ourselves, there is a Knowing ABOUT," and also "in the now of presentation there is a Knowing IN", a direct and immediate way of apprehending and embodying the event. What we remember and how we remember it, is an act of self-discovery and self-recovery that defines us (Weber 2000: 142) and thus gifts the possibility that we can identify and revise our personal ethos. I believe that the exploration of memory (especially in a systematic and organised form such as *recapitulation*) allows for an 'ethical encounter' within and between the many sub-selves of the fractal self, as well as in relation to others (those with whom we have interacted in the past and those who will be impacted by our current ethical constitution in the present and future).

Like theatre, exploring memory (*recapitulation*) affords us a chance to improvise and play, to rehearse and map potential pathways for action, without "live ammunition" as Levy puts it (1997: 66). It is a form of ethical deliberation in a context where *serious play* becomes more literal than metaphor.

While *recapitulation* is a specific *resource* I possessed in my repository of tools and skills, its complementarity to techniques utilised in performance education was established in my Masters thesis (2010). I would posit that most performance educators are versed in methods of accessing and making use of memory for character and content generation; as such their own skills, techniques and approaches can be drawn on to serve their personal enquiry.

In light of the title of this *Performed Narrative* there are ethical tensions between license and limits that must be observed in an exploration of memory. As highlighted in this chapter, exploring affective memory has been identified as a significant ethical concern (Geer 1993, Burgoyne et al. 1999, Seton 2006, Szlawieniec-Haw 2012) so it seems somewhat paradoxical to position this as an important part of a process of ethical self enquiry. However, rather than detracting from the utility of exploring memory in this context I would argue that this in fact motivates it. Undergoing a conscientious process of exploring memory may in fact assist with illuminating where the “psychological hazards” (Brandfonbrener 1992: 101) involved in affective memory techniques reside. Similarly, there are dangers such as ‘character invasion’ inherent in imaginal projection and ‘*stepping into another’s shoes*’. Once more I believe that exercises explored in this chapter may illuminate a deeper understanding of the implications for performers who are asked to inhabit characters of dubious moral standing. And if such memory-based and imaginal exercises are focussed on ethics and emphasise positive role modelling, I believe they can be of great benefit in exploring and making answer to the call for ethics from the ‘inside’; using the *resources* (memories, knowledge, embodied experience and skills/talents) performance educators naturally possess. An exploration of memory, as described and reflected upon in this chapter, thus contributes to addressing my first four research aims<sup>78</sup>.

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<sup>78</sup> To review, see Chapter 1, section 1.5.5.



## CHAPTER THREE:            **Fishing Expedition #2: Journaling as a practice of being and becoming a ‘good’ teacher and researcher**

This chapter explores my use of journaling as an ethical self enquiry and research practice. Concurrent with generating an inventory of ethically contentious incidents and experiences through an exploration of memory, I felt a need to record my process of investigation as it unfolded. Once again I would describe journaling as one of the existing creative *resources* or tools I had at my disposal to draw on when I began this study. The use of journals, in general or for the purposes of navigating a specific production or process, is something I would regard as fairly common in performance and its education, a view that is reinforced by Janesick (1999) and Sutherland (2007). I have kept journals for two decades and have made significant use of them as a personal ‘sense making’ technology, with more or less intensity depending on what I was processing at the time. I recognised in the early stages of this research process that the very act of exploring ethics was evolving my ethical knowledge and impacting my personal ethos (ethical orientations/stance). In order to capture this development I began to keep a journal of my *serious play* in ethics soon after embarking on this study (August 2013). I kept this journal throughout my research and writing process and it was the one practice that carried over from Trawling Phase 1 into the subsequent research phases. In the final stages of this study it began to merge with my process of composing and formulating this *Performed Narrative*<sup>79</sup>.

### 3.1        **Reflections on keeping a journal of evolving ethics**

This section offers reflections on my process of journaling as an ethical self enquiry tool and practice. It includes an appraisal of the utility and relevance of the practice within the context of ethical self enquiry, research, general ethics and ethics in performance and its education.

In Trawling Phase 2 I discovered that reflective journal keeping is a common and accepted qualitative research practice (Ortlipp 2008: 695) that originates in “constructivist, feminist, interpretivist, and poststructuralist perspectives” (Ortlipp 2008: 705). Qualitative researcher, artist and choreographer Valerie Janesick describes her work as a process of “constantly making connections between the work of the artist and the work of the qualitative researcher”, and describes journal writing as having its “seeds and tradition in the arts and humanities” (1999: 511). For me, this organically situates journaling as a broadly relevant and accessible practice that artist educators may turn to as part of a process of ethical self enquiry.

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<sup>79</sup> This will be explained in further detail in Chapter 9.

Yet, despite the fact that reflective journal keeping is a common practice in qualitative research, it is only in recent years that practitioners and commentators (Janesick 1999, Borg 2001, Ortlipp 2008, Lamb 2013) have begun to more directly address how journal keeping may be used, methodologically speaking, as “an integral part of the research process” (Ortlipp 2008: 696).

[I]n the training and education of teachers, the reflective journal is common practice and central to their professional development [...]. With regard to the professional development of researchers, little is known about the benefits of using research journals. Furthermore, it seems that using a research journal to capture additional data is underdeveloped amongst qualitative researchers (Lamb 2013: 84).

Research trends indicate that “critical self-reflection” extends beyond mere “methodological rigor and paradigmatic consistency” and that journal keeping may impact “research design, methods used, and approaches taken” (Ortlipp 2008: 703). In qualitative research, researchers are increasingly being urged to reveal the background assumptions and values that guide and influence the research process as it unfolds, and such reflective practice aims “to make visible to the reader the constructed nature of research outcomes” (Ortlipp 2008: 695), where “opinions, thoughts, and feelings” are “acknowledged” as “part of the research design, data generation, analysis, and interpretation process” (Ortlipp 2008: 704).

Ortlipp suggests that journaling assists with bringing “the unconscious into consciousness” (2008: 698), and Janesick describes it as a “powerful research technique” for both the researchers and the participants in a research study (1991: 521):

The definitions of the roles of the researcher and participants in a study are clarified through the reflection and the writing process involved in journal writing. Because the researcher is the research instrument, keeping a journal is a check and balance in the entire course of a qualitative research project. Likewise, keeping a journal during the course of a research project is a way to practice interdisciplinary triangulation. Because journal writing is part of the history of the arts and humanities, and part of various psychological studies, human services researchers benefit from this type of triangulation. I often use the metaphor of journal writing as sculpting (Janesick 1999: 521).

Owing to the fact that I was often discovering and learning to more deeply understand intuitive research directions and explorations as I went along, I found journaling extremely useful in the sense of being a “researcher in training” (Janesick 1999: 522). Janesick lists the benefits of the practice of journal keeping in such a context as follows:

1. It allows the writer to be more reflective.
2. It offers the writer an opportunity to write uninterrupted, and totally focused on the point at hand.
3. It is a technique well used in the arts and humanities, and may offer social science researchers an opportunity to cross borders so to speak.

4. It allows for deepening knowledge of whatever subject matter the researcher takes part in.
5. It allows participants in a research project an active voice.
6. It may allow researchers and participants the opportunity to write cooperatively, and interactively as needed.
7. It provides an additional data set to outline, describe, and explain the exact role of the researcher in any given project (1999: 522 - 523).

Of course there exists what Denzin (1994: 501) refers to as “the interpretive crisis” in qualitative research, which relates to the nature of subjectivity and bias in research practices and writing. “There is a lack of agreement on the amount and type of researcher influence that is acceptable, and whether and how it needs to be ‘controlled’ and accounted for” (Ortlipp 2008: 698). Lamb (2013: 85) recognises such fallibility but counters it with the suggestion that “reflecting on different aspects of the research process when writing a research journal provides a forum to record concerns which may have otherwise been lost, or [...] simply not considered”. In his own experience the use of a research journal provided him with an “outlet” and space for “observations that were not recorded elsewhere and encouraged critical analysis and critical thinking, both key research skills in qualitative research” (2013: 85). Citing Jasper (2005), Lamb suggests that journaling as a research practice may contribute to the “trustworthiness of a research study” (Jasper in Lamb 2013: 86). Furthermore, he suggests that “[g]aining insights into the world of the researcher is often problematic, but the compilation of a research journal provides a window into their experience through personal reflection and can be utilised as an important methodological tool” (2013: 86). Janesick suggests that journal keeping is “a type of connoisseurship by which individuals become connoisseurs of their own thinking and reflection patterns, and indeed their own understanding of their work as qualitative researchers” (1999: 506).

What I came to call my *Ethics Evolution Journal* (Prigge 2014b) was a creative research practice or strategy that fulfilled a diversity of functions. In terms of answering my guiding research question it offered a significant body of information I could ‘trawl’ in the process of seeking and identifying items to add to my growing inventory of ethical concerns. The journal furthermore granted me an opportunity to provide, in so far as is possible, a ‘real time’ account of how the process of interrogating ethics affected and influenced me, and in the end this journal reflects the evolutionary nature, or growth curve, of my exploration. During the French Revolution many writers made sense of the unfolding historical and political milieu by keeping “journals intime” (Janesick 1999: 509), an analogy which I found useful with regards to my own experience.

There was so much more to my process, however, than mere record keeping. Journaling supported, affected and changed my ethical maturation and education. It also influenced the nature and direction of my research process, a recognition that is mirrored in the experiences of commentators such as Janesick (1999), Borg (2001), Ortlipp (2008) and Lamb (2013).

### 3.1.1 Giving everyone (in my inner ensemble) a voice

Where this journal was possibly most useful, was with regard to allowing me to observe clearly my inner fragmentation, or ‘multiplicity’ of identity. Journal entries made at different times during the process clearly had different ‘tones’, or were the work of different ‘characters’ in my inner ensemble. The ethical code or ‘ethos’ adopted by one character did not necessarily agree with that of another. I experienced the living ethical tensions between conflicting, even warring, aspects of myself. When we have a diversity of social roles to play (such as, in this context, that of teacher, student, choreographer, dancer, actor, director), we don different masks, and each mask has a particular code of ethics it ascribes to. Differences between these may be vast or subtle. This became increasingly apparent to me as I engaged with my own ethics journal. Referencing the work of psychologist Philip Zimbardo (2008), Matousek (2011: 111) suggests how our capacity and tendency to “compartmentalise” our behaviour through role-taking explains how a good husband could also be an adulterer, or a saintly priest might also be a pederast:

Compartmentalization allows us to sort conflicting aspects of our behaviour into different mental “role baskets” that do not spill into one another. [...] We use roles to absolve ourselves of guilt. Overestimating our reasoning powers, and underestimating the force of situations, we’re frequently surprised by our extreme contradictions (Matousek 2011: 111).

In 2003 and 2004 I completed a process in archetype work developed by author and spiritual teacher Caroline Myss which is presented in her book *Sacred Contracts: Awakening Your Divine Potential* (2001). This was again a creative *resource* in my repository of investigative strategies or practices that I had access to, and made use of. The process involves identifying archetypes that play a central role in one’s life and then interviewing them, allowing them to speak in their own voice. The congruence with theatre and performance is clear: this process calls for an act of imaginative projection into a clearly defined character (or archetypal attitude); by adopting a particular point of view and tone of voice, a different orientation is embodied. As a performer and performance educator I have found archetype work extremely useful as a tool for character study, and most importantly as a study of the formation of personal character (or self-identity)<sup>80</sup>. Joseph Campbell (1968), one of Jung’s best known disciples explains that “since archetypes or norms of myth are common to the human species, they are inherently expressive [...] of common human needs, instincts and potentials” (in Myss 2001: 142). Archetypes grant us access to aspects of self that are not only personal, but that have a more universal, or in Jung’s terminology “collective unconscious” (Adler and Hull 1970), orientation.

As I reflected on entries in my *Ethics Evolution Journal*, I considered whose voice - or which archetypal character associated with one or more of the various roles I inhabit in the context of

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<sup>80</sup> “[A]lthough archetypes are patterns of influence that are both ancient and universal, they become quite personalized when they are a part of an individual’s own psyche” (Myss 2001: 142).

performance and its education - I was writing from. A diversity of archetypal voices arose: the wounded healer, the victim, the prostitute, the magical child, the judge, the critic, the visionary, the exorcist, the guide, the teacher, the scholar, the parent, the liberator and the fool (to name but a few). Each of these voices offered a specific perspective on the ethical territory I was navigating. Each was arguably a facet of what psychologist Terry Marks-Tarlow (2010) refers to as the ‘fractal’<sup>81</sup> self.

### 3.1.2 Improvisation #2: Pairing archetypes within and without in search of dynamic points of view

As a creative exercise to more clearly identify a unifying personal ethos, I re-read my journal entries through different archetypal ‘lenses’. I viewed the words of my victim through the eyes of my healer; I re-read the words of my liberator with the eyes of my magical child; I considered the words of my scholar from the perspective of my teacher, and so forth. I learnt how to see each issue that came up in my research from multiple points of view, using my imagination as a gateway to becoming every ‘other’ contained within myself.

At times these inner voices echoed the voices of individuals of my outer reality (either living, or deceased but still present and reverberating within me), such as my parents, a church minister, siblings, teachers and lecturers, professional colleagues, peers and friends. I saw my behaviour through their eyes, through *their* words as *I* wrote them.

I wondered what ‘so-and-so’ would think or say in response to my discovery that my victim was whining too much:

*“Grow up and get over yourself – it’s not that bad – we all had to go through it – you’re nothing special – don’t be such a ninny. Art is about sacrifice – have you forgotten who you are?”*

I wondered what ‘so-and-so’ would say when my exorcist’s words tore down the lofty visions of art they had built into my being:

*“What has happened to you? Why are you doing this? Have you lost touch with your art...with art itself? We are artists – this is what we do. We break the rules. We don’t conform.”*

This process helped me to consider where I felt someone might oppose or criticise my thinking and feelings, where someone I have known, or still know, might disagree with my ethical stance on a certain issue.

I took different points of view into account as a means to develop empathy and understanding for alternative and divergent orientations and attitudes without necessarily surrendering or becoming

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<sup>81</sup> “A fractal model suggests that the whole of the self, intact during early play, exhibits self-similar resonances in the content and forms of self-expression throughout life” (Marks-Tarlow 2010: 31).

servile to them. In many respects this process highlighted and clarified my personal convictions, without rejecting or making the other ‘wrong’.

### 3.1.3 Journals and memory: the power of record

Keeping a journal, suggests Weber (2000: 235), allows us to “discern patterns, meanings, and larger trends behind our actions”. By identifying motive and purpose in past actions we become better able to observe purpose unfolding into future actions. As a ‘sense-making’ technology, journaling allowed me to observe what I was thinking about a particular issue, sometimes for the first time; writing forces a coherence and an honesty that continues to surprise me. There is support for this orientation in the view of writer Joan Didion. In *The White Album* (1979) she advanced the idea that “we tell ourselves stories in order to live” (in Iyengar 2011: 20), and admitted to author Mark Matousek that until she commits ideas to paper, “I don’t even know what I *think*!” (Matousek 2011: 80)<sup>82</sup>.

We have engaged in an act of tense shifting, moving from understanding our past acts to understanding our future ones. Our reflective capabilities enable us to see ourselves in the story of our life, as a character in an unfolding story. We are writing our own story (Weber 2000: 235).

Weber suggests that there is no better mechanism for keeping track of our memories, and how we interpret them, than keeping a journal (2000: 133). Journals are a means of self-definition and self-discovery. They are a way of observing the “interpretive self in motion” since “we shape ourselves by how we remember” (2000: 133). Matousek draws a direct parallel between our sense of identity (self-interpretation) and language; without language what we call the ‘self’ could not exist<sup>83</sup>. Identity and self-image are built on the foundations of “the stories we tell ourselves *about* ourselves (based on experience, memory and personal belief)” (2011: 79 -80)<sup>84</sup>. He goes on to link this to ethics in the sense that “[o]ur behaviour is determined by what we tell ourselves is right and wrong”. Once humans developed the capacity for speech and could begin to dialogue and exchange opinions and ideas, morals systems could develop (Matousek 2011: 79).

To create systems of fairness, justice, loyalty, and so on, early humans set about experimenting with various sets of “normative resources” - rules, stories, myths, images and more - to define, and refine, the way we ought to live. “Ought” is the operative word here: The leap from *is* to *ought* was our first step toward becoming moral beings, extrapolating general codes of conduct from successful strategies for individual and group integrity (Matousek 2011: 80)<sup>85</sup>.

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<sup>82</sup> Emphasis in original.

<sup>83</sup> “In order to think about ourselves, we must create a narrative. For the purposes of self-determination, each of us *is* his or her story, in fact. The self we believe in gives us an inner world full of simulations, social comparisons, and reputation concerns” (Matousek 2011: 80). Emphasis in original.

<sup>84</sup> Emphasis in original.

<sup>85</sup> Emphases in original.

I have found journaling to be a powerful tool for observing and reflecting upon ‘successful’ or ‘unsuccessful’ ethical strategies over time. Referring to the work of Taylor (1989), Brinkman (2008: 410) describes morality as “real”; it is something we have to confront and deal with because “we need the kind of understanding of the world that can only be expressed in moral concepts”. “What better measure of reality do we have in human affairs than those terms which on critical reflection and after correction of the errors we can detect make the best sense of our lives?” (Taylor in Brinkman 2008: 410).

Journals allow for the observation of what does, or does not, work based on direct lived experience: cause and effect, actions and consequences, are clearly revealed; as are acts involving poor choices or a lack of discernment and/or integrity. A journal may then become a record of choice. In *The Art of Choosing* (2011), Sheena Iyengar observes the relation of choice to narrative:

We tell stories about choice for many reasons. We want to learn or teach; we want to know others or have them know us; we want to understand how we got from there to here. We take the choices that for some reason or other have lit up like stars across our memory, and we chart our journey by them. This is why I won the race. This is how I survived. This is when everything changed. Through these stories we assert that what we do matters. By speaking choice, we find a way to navigate the strange waters of life, maybe even appreciate their unpredictable movement (2011: 267-268).

As Matousek aptly puts it: “The life myth is composed by labelling experience as ‘good’ or ‘bad’. These labels dictate how experience is imprinted in our minds as reality” (2011: 88). Journals provide the highs and the lows, the boons and the blows of embodied experience. As such they evince the polarities we navigate and often pendulum between, and thus orient our relation to self and the world. Being able to observe how we behaved and why allows us to maintain, or strive to attain, coherence and integrity; and such a process is inherently ethical by nature.

### 3.1.4 Journaling as a ‘survival tool’

Particularly at times when I was feeling overwhelmed or at some sort of impasse, I would use my journal to engage in Automatic Writing, a technique I have used and taught to others since 2004:

Basically all that is required is a relaxing of the mind so that we are free to experience intuitive data that rises up from the unconscious and subconscious realms of our beings and from the universe of energy that surrounds us. We then write down the messages we receive, unedited, as they are, whether they make sense or not. For this reason it is referred to as ‘Automatic’ writing, because there is no conscious thought process structuring and making decisions as to what is written. It is immediate and spontaneous (Prigge 2004: 2)<sup>86</sup>.

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<sup>86</sup> I was introduced to Automatic Writing through the work of Lucia Capacchione (2000), Caroline Myss (2001) and Julia Cameron (2002).



At such times journaling served as a palliative or therapeutic tool; at other times it became a means whereby I could give advice to myself. In the words of Cooper (1991):

Writing in a journal is thus a way to attend to the self, to care for and feed oneself. It can be a place to dump anger, guilt, or fear [...]. It can be a place to clarify what it is we feel angry or guilty about. It can be a place to encourage ourselves, to support ourselves, in working through that anger or guilt, and it can be a place to transform silence into language and action (in Borg 2001: 164-165).

Borg (2001: 165) describes this process as a species of “therapeutic self-dialogue”, what Thomas (in Borg 2001: 165) refers to as “intracommunication”. Borg suggests, as per my own experience, that journaling offered “an effective way for me to handle the affective side of the work” (Borg 2001: 165). And this does not only pertain to the purview of ethical self enquiry but also more generally to the rigours of research:

Emotions [...] are an undeniable part of the human researcher’s work, and the research journal can assist the researcher in acknowledging these emotions, expressing them, and, particularly where these emotions threaten the progress of the research, analysing and reacting to them. The much-discussed therapeutic function of journal writing does have a contribution to make to the work of researchers too (Borg 2001: 164).

In a sense it was for me a ‘survival’ tool, assisting me to manage the ‘discomfort’ of “vulnerability and insecurity” and the concomitant ‘risk’ of “confrontation and struggle” associated with self reflective writing (Sutherland 2007: 116):

Part of the writing process reveals to the writer that far from the chaos which memory captures, they managed to adapt, survive, cope and learn. For example, there are many instances where a narrative starts with ‘it was a disaster’ or ‘it felt so terrible’. As the student processes the experience through writing about it, several constructive and positive aspects are noted, and the inherent instability of real-world artistic practice is slowly acknowledged (Sutherland 2007: 115).

Markham suggests that it is in fact a part of a teacher’s job “to push students slightly out of their comfort zones to expose them to different perspectives in meaningful ways” (1998: 92) and to shake students out of their stable views and beliefs about themselves in ways that are sensitive to, and can balance, the tensions between the “comfort necessary for openness” and the “discomfort necessary for change” (1998: 93). Journaling is extremely useful as a means of self-observation and self-confrontation and it definitely assisted me with managing the growth curve I underwent as I progressed with research; it grounded my ethical self enquiry process and practice in the face of unpredictability and dis-ease.

Griggs (2001: 34) proposes that narrative enquiry and method acting:

[R]equire an openness to continued intrapersonal - and thereby interpersonal - growth, as well as consideration of alternative courses of action to those which normally delimit one's identity, and which stultify or preclude the potential for behaving in ways which at first glance seem unfathomable or 'impossible'.

I believe that journaling and all of the core practices I engaged as part of my process of ethical self enquiry are effectively examples of "teacher preparation techniques" which Griggs (2001: 34) suggests can bring us closer to "how we are 'put together' and also by implication how our students are 'put together,' of what our/their lives are like, and of how these circumstances influence lives within the context of the classroom". Referencing Hallinger and Heck (2002), Cranston and Kusanovich (2013: 28) emphasise the reality that education "is necessarily a moral enterprise", and in and of itself journaling is undoubtedly a tool that can enhance our ethical self reflection and aid us in navigating the "complex realities of the teaching profession" (Griggs 2001: 34).

### 3.1.5 Journaling in search of a personal ethos

One of the key motivations behind keeping an *Ethics Evolution Journal* (Prigge 2014b) was to observe my ambiguity, contradictions, biases, judgments and discriminations so that I could more deeply understand why and how I was identifying various practices and behaviours in performance and its education as being ethically questionable or contentious. Ortlipp refers to the researcher's values, history and background assumptions as "baggage" and speaks of the need to reveal these in the presentation of research so that the reader can understand where he or she (and thus his or her research focus) is coming from (2008: 698). This echoes Walford's understanding (in Holliday 2012: 11) that qualitative research should reveal its 'messiness', as mentioned in Chapter One, and reinforces the fact that making stylistic and structural choices and selecting inclusions and omissions in this *Performed Narrative* is an ethical endeavour. Janesick suggests that journal writing is "a form of permanent insurrection, and qualitative researchers one way or another are usually involved in permanent insurrection" (1999: 519). The objective in such qualitative research practices is to present research:

[I]n ways that make it clear how the researcher's own experiences, values, and positions of privilege in various hierarchies have influenced their research interests, the way they choose to do their research, and the ways they choose to represent their research findings (Ortlipp 2008: 695).

Building on the idea of 'body dysmorphia' that anorexics suffer from, Matousek (2011: 80) forwards the notion that most of us progress through life with a degree of "self dysmorphia", which means we have a largely distorted idea of our own character. He suggests that if we were to listen to our minds (and I posit, review our past journal entries), we would soon identify our ethical stance as we "confabulate reality" and use "semantics to strengthen one argument over another" in the appraisal of situations. Welwood writes that our life stories become "self-fulfilling prophecies": "A story creates a reality that in turn reinforces the story. In this way, we become more and more locked into a false self

and a distorted view of reality” (2000: 138). It is in observing our contradictions that we might liberate ourselves from becoming overly dogmatic and fixated on one set view of self (and thus reality and the ‘other’). Weber (2000: 133) points out that journaling gifts us the opportunity to observe our “incoherence”; or what I refer to as the potential of ‘giving every character in my inner ensemble a voice’. Confronting and acknowledging this incoherence or ambivalence, this multiplicity and ambiguity of self, creates an expanded sense of self which ironically tends toward greater coherence in its increasing complexity.

The *Ethics Evolution Journal* was useful in helping me to explore the bias with which I approached this study and to understand it more clearly. Without the view that certain practices and behaviours in the culture of performance and its education are potentially unethical I would never have engaged this study. This study does not ask: “is something wrong?” It suggests that something *is* wrong and seeks to expose ‘what’ this is. How did this bias originate and develop? What has informed and motivated it? Why have I come to be interested in, or conscious of ethical concerns? How might understanding my own ‘story of awakening’ become useful to others?<sup>87</sup> I began this intuitive research process in part to identify and conscientise my personal ethos, and now I recognised what might seem obvious to others, but which took a while for me to make sense of: my ‘personal ethos’ and a *bias* are effectively so closely interrelated as to equate to one and the same thing<sup>88</sup>.

### 3.1.6 Journaling and the *Performed Narrative*

The composition of this *Performed Narrative* was itself a form of ethics education and maturation in so far as it demanded rigorous, and thus ethical, research practice. The unfolding of my journaling practice directly influenced and contributed to this development in the form of insights and ideas regarding presentation and the formulation of various aspects of research. As Janesick observes:

Basically, the art of journal writing and subsequent interpretations of journal writing produce meaning and understanding that are shaped by genre, the narrative form used, and personal cultural and paradigmatic conventions of the writer [...] (1999: 507).

One of the instances in which I was able to observe this was in how journaling assisted/allowed me to navigate many of the ethical tensions between the license and limits of research. This is vividly evidenced in my journal record where numerous entries dealt with my challenge to discover the ‘Goldilocks’ solution<sup>89</sup> of ‘just right’ or ‘just enough’ exposure of self and others. This record describes the wrangling I went through to manage the degree to which I should, or could, expose my

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<sup>87</sup> See Addendum 1, questions 1-6 in the *Personal Ethics Questionnaire* I created to observe the means by which I interrogated my background motivations for embarking on a process of ethical self enquiry.

<sup>88</sup> The impulse to more directly map the evolution of this bias was a significant motivation (Prigge 2014b: 4) toward creating the *Personal Ethics Questionnaire* (Prigge 2014c) which was the next step in my intuitive research process and which will be discussed in the chapter to follow.

<sup>89</sup> For further exposition regarding the ‘Goldilocks Effect’ see Chapter 9, Section 9.2.

personal experiences and opinions (Prigge 2014b). The issue centred on observing the rights of others inculcated in historical experience and finding appropriate ways to demonstrate a process of ethical self enquiry without paradoxically violating research ethics in the process. My overall experience in this regard resonates strongly with Orliipp's observation that "critical self-reflection is a way of considering the ethics of the power-knowledge relationship with participants" (2008: 702). Journaling offered me the freedom to 'say it like it is' but this was not always respectful or considerate of the feelings or rights of others.

In *Writing and performing change: the use of writing journals to promote reflexivity in a Drama Studies curriculum* (2007), Alexandra Sutherland touches on the exact issue of degrees of exposure I wrestled with by suggesting that students may often struggle to find their own voice in journal writing; a voice which is "neither academic nor confessional" (2007: 118). From one week to the next, one day to the next, and sometimes within the course of a day, I would vacillate between the desire to follow a 'traditional' academic route by hiding behind a 'third person' and revealing nothing of myself, and the desire to 'say it like it is' and expose everything. I found that completely different voices made various journal entries; completely different inner characters were at work. Each of these characters represents an aspect of my whole (fractal) self. Sutherland addresses such multiplicity of self directly:

The complexities of writing personally, reflectively and critically involve a mixed genre, multi-voiced approach, and therefore the exploration of different voices and identities is encouraged. Extending our ability to negotiate and apply a range of genres, and therefore voices, prepares us for a world of supercomplexity (2007: 118).

Navigating how I might use the results of my journaling as a data resource in the presentation of this *Performed Narrative* thus called me to learn to think more expansively, in new and increasingly complex, and ultimately ethical, ways.

As my journaling progressed I began reflecting on my entries and seeking extracts to include in this *Performed Narrative*. I began increasingly to pay attention to not only *what* I wrote but *how* I wrote it; and perhaps more importantly, *why*. What were the deeper motivations? What was I really seeking to achieve? Were my objectives self-serving versus oriented toward mutual liberation and empowerment of self and/or others? In the first *rehearsal* (completed draft one) of this *Performed Narrative* I included long extracts lifted directly from my *Ethics Evolution Journal* as a means to share my background assumptions and give voice to my true feelings. However, I eventually 'exfoliated' this 'dead skin' as my level of ethical maturity/education progressed. Like a snake 'shedding', I outgrew and transcended the urgent need I originally felt to share my voice in this way<sup>90</sup>. This is not to say that including excerpts from journals is not methodologically appropriate in qualitative research. Janesick (1999), Borg (2001), Orliipp (2008) and Lamb (2013) all argue for and include journal entries as part

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<sup>90</sup> This process of 'exfoliating' personal material will be touched on again in Chapter 9.

of the presentation of their research. This must however be appropriate and relevant to the particular study. In my instance, I believe that such relevance does exist on a methodological level; however, my ultimate choice to exclude this material had more to do with observing my personal ethical evolution and growth, and raising my personal experiences to a level where they might have a more general or universal utility in the realm of *ethics* in drama, theatre and performance education (which remains the focus of this study), rather than in the realm of *research practice*. It was thanks to my journaling practice that I was able to observe and clarify this distinction.

Even so, more and more I began to recognise that becoming more versed in research methodologies and research ethics was indivisible from my process of ethical self enquiry and thus the presentation of findings<sup>91</sup>.

### 3.2 Gathering in the net: journaling as an ethical self enquiry practice

Journaling liberated my many voices - especially those previously restricted or banned by the academic frame; and granted me the freedom to write without censure of any kind, to mention the names of people and institutions and to describe details. Here I gave voice to how I felt about what I and others had *actually done*. I vented my frustrations, purged my anger, expressed my tears of shame, and wrangled with a number of existential crises that presented themselves along the way. I included everything I would not be able to present directly in this *Performed Narrative*, and so journaling offered a far more vivid and accurate window to my true feelings regarding various issues. This was immensely useful with regard to defining and understanding my personal ethos and thus the bias from which I approached this study, and according to which I (historically and currently) identify ethical concerns in performance and its education. When it came to preparing this *Performed Narrative*, I recognised that the *Ethics Evolution Journal* allowed me to start identifying, observing and confronting many of my own ambiguities, contradictions, biases, judgments and discriminations; thereby facilitating a raising of personal consciousness.

Journaling also enabled me to notice when and how I found solutions for navigating the necessary forward motion of the process, as the goal posts continually shifted and changed. One of the challenges of a research process - particularly an intuitive, improvised and creative one - and its presentation is that rates of change can be extremely rapid. The dynamics can shift in a few hours as a result of emergent personal realisations and revelations. There is an ongoing process of chaos and reform, often occurring very quickly, and it can be easy to lose sight of one's direction and bearing. Obviously a research proposal is designed to assist with staying on track, but when the process is

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<sup>91</sup> See Improvisation #6 in Chapter 9, section 9.1.1, for further exploration of the relationship between research ethics and ethical enquiry in performance and its education.

actually changing you as a person and thus by extension changing your thinking and *being*, a proposal can in fact become an impediment and limitation to true discovery and learning.

Borg (2001) and Ortlipp (2008) discuss the potential that research journals offer with regard to navigating the impact of critical self-reflection on research design, methodologies and practices employed. A research journal, suggests Ortlipp, can have “concrete effects on the research design”, and its goal is “to provide a research ‘trail’ of gradually altering methodologies and reshaping analysis” (2008: 696). Like Ortlipp I found that I spent as much journaling time analysing my research practices and emergent methodologies as actually dealing with the focus of this study (ethics in drama theatre and performance education):

It was through written reflections in my journal that I clarified my research aims and approach where I asked, explored, and answered ontological, epistemological, and methodological questions about what I could know, my relationship to what could be known, and how I might come to know it (Ortlipp 2008: 699-700).

Journaling also assisted me to recognise that the research methodologies I was using would have to reflect an interrelationship with the nature and focus of this study itself. As research progressed I thus increasingly favoured research methods *and* ethical approaches that allow for the integration of form and content, and emphasise process over product.

With regard to rates of change, in a single session of *recapitulation* or a single contemplation of an hour or two, the sheer volume of thinking or experience cannot be contained. This would in some instances equate to hundreds of pages of material per day were I to write it all down in a journal. Thus admittedly the *Ethics Evolution Journal*, while aiming to be a reflection of the process of navigating this enquiry, was in itself very limited and does by no means tell the full story. Still it was a necessary and vital support and aid. It gave me something to refer back to and enabled me to ‘map-the-gap’ and witness how the research process was changing me the more I engaged and the deeper I entered the territory. It was both an investigative, and palliative or therapeutic tool: full of sound and fury, and full of calming advice and reassurance from myself to myself.

Owing to the support offered by journaling I would recommend it as a practice for anyone engaging in a process of ethical self enquiry. Since journals are common tools in both the arts and qualitative research I would expect that the practice would, if not already familiar, be appropriate and applicable for those of an artistic temperament. As a reflecting and processing tool, journaling allowed me to identify a number of ethical concerns and territories in performance and its education that I might not have noticed otherwise. In many instances these were side issues that did not arise from direct interrogation as per the exploration of memory (*recapitulation*). Journaling was also important in that it allowed me to observe my personal ethos in action. While many of the other practices employed in

my exploration and process of ethical self enquiry were outwardly directed toward the *what* (ethical considerations and territories), journaling allowed me to observe the *how* - my research (exploration) practices themselves. Because a personal ethos rests on attitudinal values it can be observed in *what* you think is right or wrong as well as in *how* you make distinctions; it is evidenced in what is perceived as well as in how such perception is organised or filtered. In effect journaling lets you “notice noticing” (inventor Richard Lang in Ferguson 2005: 91), or to observe the perceptual lens (thus ethical stance) through which you navigate life and choices. Describing and reflecting on the use of journaling in a process of ethical self enquiry as a means to conscientising personal value positions or a ‘personal ethos’, as well as contributing to identifying ethical concerns in drama, theatre and performance education, and owing to the fact that my journaling practice ultimately merged with the composition of this *Performed Narrative*, thus assists with realising all of my research aims<sup>92</sup>.

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<sup>92</sup> To review, see Chapter 1, section 1.5.5.



## CHAPTER FOUR: Fishing Expedition #3: Self-interview as a species of “informed reflection”<sup>93</sup>

This chapter details my exploration of self-interview as an ethical self enquiry research practice. Self-interview is a technique with which I am extremely familiar; it has been central to my work in self-development during the course of the past two decades. In *ACTivation: Playing Your Self* (Prigge 2005), I made extensive use of it as a means to identify and observe patterns<sup>94</sup> in the creation and maintenance of the personal ‘life character’ or identity (persona); it is also a central practice in the performance education module *Mantras in Motion* I developed and which has been presented as part of Stellenbosch University Drama Department’s movement and physical theatre courses since 2006. Once again I would describe self-interview as a creative *resource* I already had at my disposal that I could draw on in my process of ethical self enquiry.

### 4.1 Creating and completing a *Personal Ethics Questionnaire*

Connelly and Clandinin speak to the role of self-interview in teacher training or teacher self-research when they observe that “[o]ne’s educational history may, for example, be brought forward for inspection by interview and self-reflection; the same is true for one’s present thinking style and concepts” (1988: 24 - 25). And conducting interviews is often central to qualitative research (Orb et al. 2000, Dickson-Swift et al. 2007). However, self-interview in the manner I approached it is possibly less common. In *The New Diary* (1978), Tristine Rainer describes a process she refers to as ‘Dialogues’ which have their origin in Gestalt Therapies and Jungian Psychotherapy (in Janesick 1999: 519). Such dialogues might be “with the self, the body, and works” (Janesick 1999: 519). I would suggest that the self-interview process I describe in this chapter is such a dialogue with the self. Janesick (1999: 519) positions this species of enquiry within the methodological frame of journal keeping as discussed in the previous chapter, and it is perhaps here that the practice I explain in the chapter to come finds support as a qualitative research practice; although I approached it as a practice in its own right.

My approach to answering the questions I devised in what I came to call a *Personal Ethics Questionnaire*<sup>95</sup> was spontaneous. As far as possible I would simply type in a ‘stream of consciousness’ fashion and only return to edit glaring spelling and grammatical errors. I was looking

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<sup>93</sup> Foucault 1994: 284.

<sup>94</sup> “All art is pattern-eering, navigating meaning using the connections between things and the meaning generated by their relationship for guidance; rather like navigating by the stars in the night sky. Like mountaineering or orienteering, pattern-eering is a system of orientation that assists exploration within a landscape; in this case the inner world” (Prigge 2005: 80).

<sup>95</sup> An amended, revised and refined version of this questionnaire can be found in Addendum 1.

for a gut-response, questing toward what I held as my inner truth. As such I tried to avoid the voice of my inner critic, judge or ‘naysayer’<sup>96</sup>. I often imagined that I was actually being interviewed by someone (a journalist or reporter), answering as if I was speaking more than writing. When I write I have a tendency to think differently. I compose and organise my thoughts in a certain way. Trying to ‘write as I would speak’ called for the use of a different kind of thinking, where editing is not an option except ‘on the fly’.

Although I answered questions in a manner that was predominantly ‘automatic’, I would suggest that the self-interview process was more cerebral and left-brained, less intuitive and creative than some of the other exploratory processes I engaged. Still, I would by no means describe the experience as dominated by reason because it offered further opportunity to express my sincere opinion free of judgments about what others might deem ‘right’ or ‘wrong’. Kathlene (1998: 5) promotes the understanding that coursework which “challenges the basis of students’ fundamental socialization *must* incorporate pedagogical techniques specifically designed to help students reconcile these ‘old’ and ‘new’ views of the world”<sup>97</sup>. She recognises a need to nurture direct personal engagement with content, and even the need to *struggle* in the formulating of strong personal opinions regarding challenging material that may disrupt understandings of the social world and one’s place in it (1998: 19). She suggests that “promoting expressive reaction” allows students to “engage the course material in personal terms allowing themselves to absorb the information in ways that transactional writing alone may stifle thinking and learning” (1998: 19). I would suggest that both the *Personal Ethics Questionnaire* and the *Ethics Evolution Journal* discussed previously hold potential as tools that can be employed in the confrontation of contentious social (ethical) issues. They also both provide a platform for the expression of feelings and ideas that can counterbalance many of the existential repercussions involved in such investigation.

Amidst the fluidity of the more spontaneous research practices I utilised, I found that having set questions to work with offered definite parameters which limited, constrained and focussed my explorations in what I feel was a necessary, stabilising and constructive manner.

The greater part of the questionnaire was created and answered in February and March 2014. When I began reflecting on my process and engaged in literary research (Trawling Phase 2) I refined this questionnaire more and more to deliberately assist the articulation of various concepts, ideas, theories and issues that I came to recognise as relevant or important to a process of ethical self enquiry, and which might prove useful for other educators. This progressed until such time as I began composing the first *rehearsal* (draft) of the *Performed Narrative* (Trawling Phase 3, July 2014).

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<sup>96</sup> “We all have our own individual sub-personalities that judge our behaviour, voices inside our heads which nag us, tell us off, sneer and jeer at us” (Park 1989: 81).

<sup>97</sup> Emphasis in original.

In some instances I used questions to prompt myself to articulate things I had not necessarily thought out clearly or ‘organised in my head’. These questions in a sense ‘forced’ me to make a stand and ‘say it as it is’, or to find words for ‘diffuse felt senses’<sup>98</sup> and to draw personal *resources* (tacit and intuitive knowledge) to the fore. Hence, more so than any of the other research practices I engaged, I ultimately came to use the questionnaire in a strategic manner to fulfil the following functions:

1. To assist me with observing the evolution of the interconnection of the three strands of *performance*, *education* and *ethics* which this study draws together, and which have increasingly intersected and intertwined as my life journey has unfolded. As such it played an important role in expanding the resource material at my disposal to build a *Narrative of Personal Ethics* which will be discussed in Chapter Five.

2. To observe, become more versed in, and cognisant of my ethical habits; the questionnaire supported my attempts to identify and confront my personal prejudices and thus the bias that motivated this study. As such it assisted with raising to consciousness my personal ethos or ethical stance. This was facilitated by the fact that it:

- allowed me to articulate my *desires* in terms of what I was seeking with regard to choosing performance (and ultimately its education) as a career, and also in terms of engaging in researching ethics in drama, theatre and performance education;
- provided an opportunity to explore the *values* I ascribe to.

3. To expand the range of perspectives from which to observe my experience; it allowed me to observe the diversity of voices or characters in my ‘inner ensemble’ and thereby broadened the scope of available data on which I could draw when identifying suggested ethical considerations. Exploring different voices (characters and archetypes) furthermore assisted with generating fictional characters for the *Parables* during the final ethical self enquiry practice I explored in Trawling Phase 1<sup>99</sup>.

4. To directly articulate and describe my experience and understanding of the culture of performance and performance education, and the memes associated with them.

5. To use a linear progression of questions that moves from past to present as a structural ‘template’ or foundation that could support my attempts to organise and retrospectively understand my thinking and process when it came to approaching the writing of this *Performed Narrative*.

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<sup>98</sup> “[I] started with a diffuse felt sense of what I wanted to say, which I have to keep referring back to along the way. I can’t know exactly what I want to say except by letting it unfold word by word, sentence by sentence. Each sentence leads to the next, which in turn builds on what has previously unfolded” (Welwood 2000: 93).

<sup>99</sup> See Chapter 6.

## 4.2 Reflections on self-interview and a *Personal Ethics Questionnaire*: answering for and interpreting myself

This section offers reflections and observations regarding my experience of using self-interview in my ethical self enquiry process. Drawing on insights gained from existing literature in Trawling Phase 2, I will appraise the utility and relevance of the practice within a process of ethical self enquiry, in the context of general ethics, and in relation to performance and its education.

### 4.2.1 Self-interview as a means to “hunt assumptions”<sup>100</sup> about pedagogical approaches and the beliefs, values and prejudices that underpin them

Self-interview is one of a body of methods Griggs (2001: 34) suggests grants the opportunity to “refine” and/or “alter” those practices we would like to retain in our work, and to identify practices that may “undermine teaching objectives” and which we may prefer to omit. According to Purcell, “reflection can be used to assess many aspects and levels of one’s teaching, including specific classroom practices, behaviors, incidents, and assignments; learning goals and outcomes; and discrepancies between the instructor’s beliefs and values” (2013: 6). Referencing the work of Brookfield (1995), he suggests that reflective tools and mechanisms are lenses that can be used to “hunt assumptions” about pedagogical approaches and the beliefs, values and prejudices we consciously or unconsciously bring to, and which impact and influence our work as educators (2013: 7). “Without exposing teachers and prospective teachers to their own belief systems, to how they construct and view their worlds, and to how these constructs [...] guide their teaching practices, there may be severe constraints on the extent to which teachers are able to develop,” observes Griggs (2001: 34). I found the *Personal Ethics Questionnaire* to be an exposing and confrontational experience; this is, I would suggest, both its power and ultimate purpose.

As I wrote I felt an enormous weight at times; a shadow seemed increasingly to loom over me as I ventured more and more through the direct and honest articulation of my personal ethos into a posture and attitude that placed me in opposition to the culture of performance and its education. I felt myself moving against a current, fighting a tide. It often exhausted me and to be honest, I felt alone and often afraid. Sitting to answer the research questions I had designed generally felt like a ‘letting of blood’ that left me feeling nauseas and drained afterwards. More than any of the other processes I engaged, I found it required a great deal of discipline; perhaps because it felt less creative or intuitive? I often questioned my sanity and had a number of moments of existential crisis. I am an artist, and here I found myself articulating critical thoughts, ideas and concepts regarding art and performance that I had somehow always taken for granted and which had become deeply embedded memes in my

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<sup>100</sup> Purcell 2013: 7.

pedagogical and professional artistic discourse, as well as my image of self. At times I did not know where the words came from, who was writing them, or why. The critique of the culture and practices of performance and its education was undeniably difficult to separate at times from a critique of who and what I have historically perceived myself to be.

Perhaps this is because the questionnaire was not simply a mechanism to cite “a collection of objective facts about me (e.g., my height or the colour of my eyes)” (Brinkman 2008: 405), but as touched on at various times throughout this writing it was ultimately a process of identity reflection and re-creation. I answered the questions with a view to make reply to the overriding and deeply embedded/implied question of “Who am I?” which, Brinkman suggests, “must refer to the agent’s self-interpretation” (2008: 405). In Taylor’s (1989) words this is a movement toward “an understanding of what is of crucial importance to us. To know who I am is a species of knowing where I stand” (in Brinkman 2008: 405). Our identities are determined ultimately by what matters to us, what we commit to, and value: “And these are not simply given, but rest on self interpretations that must be articulated in words and images within one or more interpretive traditions [...]” (Brinkman 2008: 405). I speculate that the power of creating/completing a questionnaire such as the one I devised for this study is illuminated by Brinkman’s (2008: 406) assertion that “[h]aving an identity means knowing where one stands with regards to important *questions*”<sup>101</sup>. Drawing on the ideas of Taylor (1989), he goes on to say that this necessitates an ability to “answer for oneself”. This is so because human agents exist always in the space of questions; and “these are questions to which our framework-definitions are answers, providing the horizon within which we know where we stand, and what meanings things have for us” (Taylor 1989 in Brinkman 2008: 406).

I found that hunting pedagogical assumptions cannot be separated from hunting ourselves. The ethics questionnaire invited me to entertain that we are what we teach and we teach what we are. Furthermore we are how we teach and we teach how we are. Knowing who we are and defining our personal ethos by conscientising it thus becomes critical in terms of managing the ethics of our pedagogy.

#### 4.2.2 Self-interview and defining a personal ethos

When I came to reflect on this process, both by reviewing the answers I had furnished in response to the questions and through literary review, I recognised that my ethical stance or personal ethos is strongly oriented toward and virtue, situationist and intuitive ethics. This may be because these approaches are synergistic with my creative sensibilities.

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<sup>101</sup> Emphasis added.

Intuitive ethics is often associated with “conscience”, an innate sense of right and wrong based on “direct cognition” or an inbuilt “moral sense” (Hazlitt 2012: 176). I resonate with this as an artist because of the emphasis in my practice of following leads and impulses and seeking a ‘felt sense’ of ‘rightness’ or ‘wrongness’. As an approach, intuitionist ethics is criticised because it may focus on actions in isolation of their consequences (Hazlitt 2012: 176). However, my understanding of intuition in an artistic sense is such that the effect or outcome of a choice or decision always includes the broader context; which accounts also for anticipated impacts on the spectator or audience. This is in keeping with my understanding of Grotowski’s emphasis on always seeking the correct balance between “spontaneity and discipline” (Kumiega 1987: 197). “In other words, if you restrain by discipline what is spontaneous, the force of the actor’s art increases” (Flaschen in Kumiega 1987: 138). Intuition as I understand it is a discipline in the sense that it is not merely a ‘knee-jerk’ reaction, but sensitive to all the nuances of a particular context. It accounts for internal (personal) dynamics and external (situational) dynamics simultaneously. Trusting intuition can err on the side of being random and compulsive, but systematic practice and effort can lead to increasing organisation. With effort and discipline, raw unbridled talent can mature into technical mastery.

Without a fixed score a work of mature art cannot exist. That’s why a search for discipline and structure is as inevitable as a search for spontaneity. Searching for spontaneity without order always leads to chaos, a lost confusion, because an inarticulate cannot confess (Grotowski in Kumiega 1987: 135-136).

Bierly et al. (2009) conducted a study to determine which ethical modalities are used by or best suited to those of a creative temperament: their findings suggest that there is a strong link between creativity and situationist ethics, and that this “has important implications for managers and teachers” (2009: 110). Their results indicated that “the discussion and practice of creativity and ethics should not be separated” (2009: 110). This approach is also closely related to humanism which draws away from religious ‘salvation’ theories and places accountability and responsibility for actions and outcome in human hands. Situationist ethics is centred on the notion of determining action and choices based on the unique set of constraints a particular context includes. Bierly et al. (2009: 110) suggest that situationists “can be very effective making difficult ethical decisions under conditions of ambiguity, as they evaluate the uniqueness of situations in non-constrained ways while maintaining an idealistic harm avoidance stance”.

Situationist and virtue approaches share clear overlaps and are thus closely aligned because of their shared emphasis on personal responsibility and accountability within the constraints of specific contexts.

Virtue theory posits a particular kind of organization of moral competence, one in which perception, motivation, action and reasoning correspond to demands placed on the person by features of situations. Naturally, the objectivity of these demands, and



the moral relevance of features of situations, are to some degree dictated by culture, by the moral concepts, social structures, and narratives that are current in the immediate social context. But this does not mean that the content or structure of a virtue is completely culturally relative. As Aristotle pointed out, and as current virtue ethicists have elaborated [...], what it means for a personality characteristic to be a *virtue*, and not simply a behavioral [sic] regularity, is largely that it consists in functioning well in a specific ‘sphere of existence’. [...] ‘[S]pheres of existence’ is similar to what evolutionary biologists would recognize as persistent adaptive challenges and other types of environmental constraint (Haidt and Joseph 2006: 21).

Because of the congruence of these approaches I increasingly came to favour virtue ethics as an overriding description of my personal ethos. Aristotle proposed that through the refinement of virtues we develop a “second nature” that builds on or extends from our basic nature (Haidt and Joseph 2004: 61)<sup>102</sup>. Virtues might be described as character traits that are earned through practice, persistence, discipline and effort (Lombardo 2011a: 6, Haidt and Joseph 2004: 61). Lombardo describes virtues as “values that have become intrinsic to the personal identity and way of life of a person. If a value is practiced enough, it becomes part of the personality or character of a person. We become what we do - what we value and aspire toward” (2011a: 4). Haidt and Joseph ultimately position virtues as “social skills” (2004: 61)<sup>103</sup>, and thus in my understanding and to phrase this in colloquial terms: virtues are about being capable of ‘walking the talk’ or *living* our personal ethos *for* self and *with* others.

Virtue ethics may be criticised because it centres on the character of the individual and “simply having the right character cannot be enough to even make the right decision likely, much less assured” (Kline 2008: 17). What determines the right character? The difficulties also extend to the fact that one person’s virtues may be considered vices by others, and a vice in one context may be deemed virtuous depending on given circumstances. Certainly different individuals, cultures and moral or ethical systems have emphasised different virtues according to context and milieu, but as the research of positive psychologist Martin Seligman (*Authentic Happiness* 2002) suggests, there are key virtues with associated sub-categories that might be considered universal:

Wisdom (Curiosity, love of learning, judgment, ingenuity, social intelligence, and perspective)  
 Courage (Valor, perseverance, and integrity)  
 Love and Humanity (Kindness, generosity, nurturance, and the capacity to love and be loved)  
 Temperance (Modesty, humility, self-control, prudence, and caution)  
 Justice (Good citizenship, fairness, loyalty, teamwork, and humane leadership)

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<sup>102</sup> “Virtue, then, is of two sorts, virtue of thought [e.g., wisdom, comprehension, intelligence] and virtue of character [e.g., generosity, temperance, courage, justice]. Virtue of thought arises and grows mostly from teaching, and hence needs experience and time. Virtue of character [i.e., of ethos] results from habit [ethos]; hence its name ‘ethical’, slightly varied from ‘ethos’. Hence it is also clear that none of the virtues of character arises in us naturally” (Aristotle in Irwin 2005: 2).

<sup>103</sup> “To possess a virtue is to have disciplined one’s faculties so they are fully and properly responsive to one’s local sociomoral context. To be kind, for example, is to have a perceptual sensitivity to certain features of situations, including those having to do with the well-being of others, and to be sensitive such that those features have an appropriate impact on one’s motivations and other responses. To be courageous is to have a different kind of sensitivity and well-formedness of response; to be patient, still another” (Haidt and Joseph 2004: 61).



Transcendence (Appreciation of beauty, gratitude, hope, spirituality, forgiveness, humor, and zest) (as summarised in Lombardo 2011a: 5-6).

Drawing on the work of Seligman (2002), Lombardo (2011a: 6) stresses that a sense of meaning and purpose in life requires the development of virtues as well as the aspiration towards a vision or goal that transcends the limited purview of the ego-bound self. “Transcendence” in Lombardo’s view runs counter to the contemporary fixation on ego and “self-gratification” and calls for the recognition of something greater or beyond the self that can become “our center [sic] of gravity and our standard for truth and value”; such as “God, country, spouse, family, community etc.” (2011a: 6). When I came to review the answers I furnished in my questionnaire I recognised that I place a high value on framing performance and its education in relation to higher values and thus educating for virtues; as articulated in my exploration of the *areté*<sup>104</sup> of theatre and a ‘good’ teacher. The potential that the habitus of performance and its education may lead to a compromising of personally held higher values or belief in an ‘organising principle’ without offering alternatives is something I identified as a suggested ethical consideration during the course of my enquiry<sup>105</sup>.

I suspect that the emphasis in performance and its education on being ‘open minded’ may lead to a loss of perspective and forfeit a grounding belief system that can terminate in ethical/moral vulnerability. As Forbes eloquently asserted: “Independence of mind can have more than one outcome; it may promise the philosopher but deliver the tyrant” (in Matousek 2011: 173).

In Schyberg’s view performers who hold to strong political or religious convictions seldom make for great actors:

Actors live in a world of play and illusion, continually studying and observing, perpetually seeking effects - a world in which ordinary people easily see personal prostitution, licentious futility and frivolity, shamelessness and heartlessness. In the theatre actors must render expression to all sorts of passions and all sorts of sentiments; hence it follows that as private persons they cannot willingly be too seriously involved in any private passion or sentiment without taking the risk of restricting their expressive ability when it comes to the others (Schyberg and Carlson 1962 III: 84).

He suggests that actors who are overtly religious or political become “tendentious”, a trait “warned against as far back as Strindberg” and one which Stanislavsky referred to as “deadly for the art of acting” (1962 III: 84-85). This view is arguably one commonly held within the habitus of performance and its education; to be overly committed to any one set of conditions or prescriptions is believed to limit expressive range and the ability to flexibly transform into characters. It is suggested that the

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<sup>104</sup> See Addendum 1, questions 16 and 26. Matousek (2011: 15) describes the ancient Greek ‘areté’ as meaning “excellence, virtue or goodness, especially of a functional sort”. Psychologist Jonathan Haidt explains that “[t]he *areté* of a knife is to cut well. The *areté* of an eye is to see well. The *areté* of a person is goodness” (in Matousek 2011: 15). Emphases in original.

<sup>105</sup> See *Parables* 1, 2, 11, 13, 14, and suggested ethical considerations 11 and 37 in Chapter 7.

chances of being presented only with roles that conform to a narrow set of character traits is incredibly slim, and if such actors play characters with which they do not feel a “common bond”, “the author's lines wither like ‘flowers in Siebel’s hand’” (Schyberg and Carlson III 1962: 85). Harrop supports this argument, although he does not frame it in terms of religious belief but in terms of a rigid conformance to or alignment with a socio-political structure (1992: 115). He stresses that the actor needs to be flexible, open and unrestricted, and that “[t]his necessary liberation of self will tend to put the actor on the side of liberalism in life: feeling, immediacy, anti-authoritarianism, pro-people rather than politician; pro-gypsy rather than government. The actor defiantly wears the baton-sinister of society’s bastard love child” (1992: 115). Yet undeniably such flexibility and fluidity has its downside; as Lombardo (2011b: 67) astutely observes “what starts off as liberating may kill you in the end”<sup>106</sup>.

In many respects my personal bias towards higher values and educating for virtues places the emphasis on the development of the individual and society over the production of art. This in itself might be the basis for ethical divergence or a conflict of vested interests with those who believe that the product (a good actor or performance) takes precedence over the health and (moral) well-being of the performer.

There is support in education (Hogan 2008: 19) for a combination of outside-in (duty, rule-based) and inside-out (virtue ethics, self-governance, and autonomous moral agency) approaches. I resonate strongly with this view. Kline suggests that virtue theories are perhaps best treated as a means to approaching moral psychology but not epistemology and that they should not be compared to theories concerning how to make choices; their strength lies in the fact that they can teach and describe the process of moral education and the means whereby humans might become moral agents (2008: 18). The entire point of what I refer to as a process of ethical self enquiry is that it may facilitate and promote the taking of personal responsibility and accountability for ethical orientations, and thus foster a sense of sincere agency as opposed to obligatory conformity or servility. In this regard I resonate strongly with Lombardo’s assertion that:

Instead of thinking of ethics - of good and bad - as static and dogmatic, we should see ethics as growing and self-reflective. I argue that a global ethics needs to emerge - in fact, that it is emerging - one that avoids the extremes of absolutism and relativism, one that strives toward consensus and still acknowledges human diversity in cultures (2011b: 291).

As I contemplated these ideas I came to realise that virtue ethics and my research strategy of intuitive ethical self enquiry are irrevocably intertwined; they are mutually revealing and reinforcing. Furthermore, my answers to the questionnaire revealed that this also accounts in large part for my

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<sup>106</sup> See *Parable* 14 in Chapter 7.

pedagogical bias toward what might be encapsulated as ‘whole person’ education (Prigge 2014c). How I am choosing to study ethics, and why, is thus perhaps most reflective of my personal ethos *and* pedagogy; they are interrelated. Although I lacked the terminology to articulate it in this manner when I began this study, taking on the task of questioning myself through self-interview is in many respects indicative, and could have been deemed prophetic of my ethical stance or personal ethos itself. These aspects all come together in the ‘whole person’ I am.

#### 4.2.3 Self-interview to explore the choices we make - the *value of values* and the desires that underpin them

Revealing, identifying, investigating and reflecting on our choices is critical to ethical self enquiry because the idea of choice (or free will) is central to ethics - and much contested (Hazlitt 2012). Upon what basis do we choose what is right or wrong, better or worse, more or less valuable? Here more than anywhere else we have a chance to see ourselves defined.

When it comes to making ethical decisions, the facts by themselves are not enough. As Velasquez et al. (2009: 1) and Carter (1998: 3) put it: a fact describes ‘what *is*’ but does not grant insight into what ‘*ought to be*’. The conundrum of trying to reach an ‘ought’ has driven many philosophers and ethicists over the centuries toward creating ethical standards against which conduct might be measured (Hazlitt 2012: 11). Hazlitt suggests that there is no way to get from an *is* to an *ought*, which makes it inconceivable that any ethical system or standards can ever be reached. “Unless our *oughts* are to be purely arbitrary, purely dogmatic, they must somehow grow out of what *is*. Now the connection between what is and what ought to be is always a *desire* of some kind” (Hazlitt 2012: 11-12)<sup>107</sup>. But then the question arises: what are good or bad desires?

Seton notes that “[t]he social dynamic behind the acting workshop is that acceptance of the teacher’s practice - in the form of willing submission - will supply the student with three important and interrelated desires - ability, recognition and reward” (2007: 2). I resonate strongly with this observation. Articulating many of my own desires in the questionnaire and also in my *Narrative of Personal Ethics* (Prigge 2014d) revealed that my deep and urgent need to be recognised attracted me to performance in the first place and furthermore placed me in a vulnerable position as a performer where I would do almost anything (be servile and conform) in order to succeed. Freiman (2010: 22-23) suggests that we should “refrain from servile behaviour on the grounds that it can corrode our contingent practical identity” and that people do not *always* act immorally out of self interest, but also because “they fail to respect themselves”, or “out of a failure to affirm and appreciate their own worth”. In my case, as a student and young professional, this was true, and it was something I carried over into my early career as an educator. Questioning my process allowed me to observe “frameworks

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<sup>107</sup> Emphases in original.

of qualitative contrasts” (Brinkman 2008: 409) that shed light on my motives and justifications for why I believed at the time that the nature of various situations supported or validated my behaving in a certain way. I once sincerely believed I wanted to be a performer. But what I was really looking for, or what I desired above all else, was *myself*; I just never knew that an audience (either spectators or educators) would never be able to give this to me<sup>108</sup>.

Clearly not all desires are good, and my desires may differ from those of other students/educators. Are the desires Seton observes worth pursuing? How might answering them as educators create opportunities for unethical practices or behaviours becoming entrenched in, or accepted as part of, training? As I reviewed my answers to the ethics questionnaire and engaged in a review of existing literature, I recognised that to expand my ethical knowledge it was critical I more deeply understand the relation of desire to ethics.

What is desirable or undesirable is generally determined according to evaluations of the relative worth or value of a quality or object<sup>109</sup>. On a personal level values describe what matters and is meaningful to individuals. The issue of desire is potentially where ethical debates burn their brightest (Anscombe 1958, Hazlitt 2012). In the words of Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743-1819):

We originally want or desire an object not because it is agreeable or good, but we call it agreeable or good because we want or desire it; and we do this because our sensuous or supersensuous nature so requires. There is, thus, no basis for recognizing what is good and worth wishing for outside of the faculty of desiring - i.e., the original desire and the wish themselves (in Hazlitt 2012: 22).

Along similar lines Benedict de Spinoza said: “In no case do we strive for, wish for, long for, or desire anything because we deem it to be good, but on the other hand we deem a thing to be good, because we strive for it, wish for it, long for it, or desire it” (in Hazlitt 2012: 22). Aristotle positioned desire as

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<sup>108</sup> Amongst other things, knowing that I have a deep-seated craving for recognition prepares me to inhibit myself from treating students as a captive audience who might bolster my vulnerable ego. For further illustration see *Parables* 2 and 17, and suggested ethical considerations 46, 47 and 48 in Chapter 7.

<sup>109</sup> There are three main positions regarding the origin of ethical values: values are granted us by a higher power (the values that should govern our behaviour are god-given) or they are invested in a higher principle such as Plato’s concept of “the Good”; another position is that values are embedded in natural law or natural principles; and finally values are totally subjective and are chosen by human beings (Thiroux and Kraseman 2012: 13). In philosophy there are also different ways to understand or approach value: preference value, instrumental value and intrinsic value (Kline 2008, Irvine 2006). As the name suggests, *Preference Value* relates to what we desire over or in comparison to other things; it deals with our likes and dislikes. Preference values, while given less emphasis in ethical theories besides “hedonistic theories” (Kline 2008: 8), can have a huge impact on our decisions and choices, even when we try to rationally guard against them (Carpenter in Irvine 2006: 110). *Instrumental Value* is largely the domain of teleological ethics which is concerned with the outcomes of actions (Kline 2008: 4). If something has instrumental value it means it is desired because achieving it will lead to an actual desired outcome which ideally should have more value than the instrumental desire itself; in other words instrumental values are a means to an end. Instrumental values allow us to delay gratification and put up with following steps in a process that may not in themselves be enjoyable or pleasurable in order to reach a goal. *Intrinsic Value* implies that an object or quality has a value that is not attached to preferences or as a means to another desired end. Much debate surrounds intrinsic value in ethics regarding whether such a thing can actually be said to exist (Kline: 2008: 4). Can something hold value even when there is no observing presence or perceiver to make it so?

a key to his moral philosophy; in *Dark Nature* (1995: 7) biologist Lyall Watson observes that, unlike the Ten Commandments of Judeo-Christianity which focus mainly on actions (barring covetousness), Aristotle identified the control of desires as the key to a good life. As Watson points out, working at the level of desire is to work at the level of motive versus being concerned with what one should or should not do. In Aristotle's view wrong actions are forgivable but wrong desires are not. Watson describes Aristotle's virtue-centred ethics as the ethics of "just enough" because desiring is considered acceptable so long as 'good' wants equate to the *need* for them (1995: 7). To want what is not needed, or to want more than is necessary, is wrong in this model of ethics. To what extent and under what conditions does satisfaction of the desires for "ability, recognition and reward" (Seton: 2007: 2) speak to genuine *needs* in performance education?

Desire is a paradox of human experience. It is desire that enables perseverance in the midst of short-term failings or mis-understandings. We applaud the person who pursues, in a disciplined way, his or her goals and proves his or her ability to perform. But it is also desire that can compel a person to accept continual abuse and mistreatment because, using the same premise of self-discipline, he or she is willing to undergo maltreatment and suffering in order 'to get it right' (Seton 2007: 1).

Not only do values define us, they also dictate our relationships with others. Shockley-Zalabak explains that values are part of "complex attitude sets that influence our behaviour and the behaviour of all those with whom we interact. What we value guides not only our personal choices but also our perceptions of the worth of others" (1999: 425-426). Educators may consciously or unconsciously exploit certain desires to various ends, many of which may be self serving versus sincerely focussed on the educational process and the greater well-being of students. The need for a 'holistic' approach to performance and its education and a perceived failure to address the 'whole' person is an ethical concern highlighted by Seton in his research in the United Kingdom (2009: 65): "[T]here is lack of conversation around approaches to, and experiences of, the teaching and learning of acting as it affects the *whole person*" (2009: 65)<sup>110</sup>. There are also recent trends in education in general that are centred on a more holistic (mind/body/spirit) (Orr 2002: 479) and integral (Adams 2011: 76) approach; and they have an unambiguous ethical emphasis. In the context of performance and its education, my answers to the *Personal Ethics Questionnaire* (Prigge 2014c) suggest that this emphasis would require a shift in focus from 'student' (performer-in-training) to 'individual', as well as from 'educator' to 'individual'; thus acknowledging all roles a person might play and taking the 'whole person' into account. This would emphasise integrated and holistic ethics, virtue ethics or an ethics of 'walking the talk'.

According to Lombardo, in his paper *Ethical Character Development and Personal and Academic Excellence*, "education should contribute to the total development of the person, not just intellectual

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<sup>110</sup> Emphasis added. This is also a concern I identified during the course of my own research; see suggested ethical considerations 35 and 60 in Chapter 7.

skills and academic knowledge but the entire personal identity, including character traits, attitudes, values, sense of self, and emotions” (2011a: 38). This orientation is not forwarded as a selfish or self serving agenda; rather he contextualises the development of the individual in light of an overarching aspiration toward the virtue of wisdom in higher education which: “addresses the need for learning and knowledge acquisition to be applied to the benefit of human society as a whole, rather than to the benefit of the individual alone” (2011a: 41). The South African *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy* (2003) clearly supports this trend:

Of vital importance to our development as people are the values that give meaning to our personal spiritual and intellectual journeys. Values and morality give meaning to our individual and social relationships. They are the common currencies that help make life more meaningful than might otherwise have been. An education system does not exist to simply serve a market, important as that may be for economic growth and material prosperity. Its primary purpose must be *to enrich the individual* and, by extension, the broader society. The kind of learner that is envisaged is one who will be imbued with the values and act in the interests of a society based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity and social justice as promoted in the constitution (S.A. Dept. of Education 2003: 9-10)<sup>111</sup>.

In lieu of clearly articulated expectations and outcomes for drama, theatre and performance education applicable to all tertiary institutions in South Africa, the South African national education curriculum for drama in schools is a useful reference. This curriculum places a strong emphasis on developing the whole person, and emphasises the development of the kind of inner *resources* this study seeks to encourage educators to conscientise and draw on. This in contrast to simply developing a ‘product’ or ‘person-in-role’ (student/performer):

Dramatic arts as a subject relies on the human being as the instrument of artistic expression and creativity. All learners (including learners with special educational needs) will develop a range of personal resources, including internal personal resources such as:  
Sensory and emotional perception (sense memory, emotional recall, empathy);  
Imagination (the use of real and imagined images creatively and transformatively);  
Discipline (self-discipline, social and artistic discipline);  
Self-esteem (personal insight, emotional satisfaction and sense of accomplishment);  
and Self-image (awareness and celebration of own identity, culture and heritage, while affirming the identity, culture and heritage of others)  
(in S.A. Dept. of Education, Politics Web: 2013).

Central to the development of the individual is the cultivation of self-awareness or ‘knowing oneself’, something the South African Education Department clearly values highly. And in order to achieve said self-awareness, suggests Lombardo, critical questions must be engaged such as:

What is it one wants in life? What does one believe? What are one’s key values? What are one’s weaknesses and strengths? Unless one is honest with oneself one cannot

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<sup>111</sup> Emphasis added.



grow and learn - one cannot remedy a mistake or failing unless one admits to it (2011a: 18).

This motivates the case for the practice of self-interview for educators and students alike. I believe that not only should ethical character development be a central educational focus for students, but such a process of ethical self enquiry, development and maturation should be a rigorous and ongoing (lifelong) focus for educators also.

Having realised, however, that while *I* may place a significant emphasis on educating the ‘whole person’ and this focus may form part of what I desire or aspire towards as an educator - and that even though commentators such as Seton may agree, and there is support within the general context of education in South Africa - this may not be so for others within my particular ‘sphere of influence’ (Haidt and Joseph 2006: 21) or organisational habitus. This issue could mark a divergence in ethical value positions and cause friction were I to enter into dialogue with fellow educators. Having conscientised this desire may, however, arm me to be suitably prepared to articulate and motivate my position appropriately; hence the value of raising to consciousness and articulating one’s personal ethos (*resources*) prior to dialogue or discussion with fellow educators.

The questionnaire assisted me to recognise that my focus on the ‘whole person’ is also indicative of my evolution as an educator; it is something that has emerged as I have increasingly paid attention to ethical concerns in performance education and was not at the foreground of my focus when I began my teaching career. This means that I should exercise caution in terms of judging others who may not agree and who may not yet have started the process of seriously addressing ethics in their personal pedagogy. Because I felt undervalued and undermined as a person due to experiences related to certain practices and their implementation in the course of my own performance education, emphasising the ‘whole person’ as a value has become an increasing focus for me and may have played a motivational role in engaging with this study. I must acknowledge that this may be somewhat of a ‘wounded healer’ syndrome in action, and others who have had different journeys and experiences may not see things the way I do.

So then, if we all have different desires, how can we *value* the same things equally?<sup>112</sup> This seems to pose a significant challenge to educators tasked with reaching consensus regarding ethical protocols

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<sup>112</sup> There are several views of what the highest value and thus ‘want’, or ‘end’ should be. What is it that we should ultimately desire? Ethical ‘hedonism’ is the attribution of highest value to that which brings pleasure and avoids pain. Simply put: pleasure is good and pain is bad and thus these distinctions denote right and wrong respectively. The highest value of happiness or unhappiness is also closely associated with such a valuation. What brings the greatest sense of joy and well-being is that which we should strive for. This includes all the variations of pleasure and happiness or pain and unhappiness: sensual, emotional, spiritual and intellectual. What causes harm or suffering to self or others, promotes ill health, disease or dis-ease would also fall under this categorisation. Another view is that excellence is the highest value. Often excellence is an attachment to or in fact precedes the pleasure or happiness argument because that which is excellent should automatically also fulfil the achievement of happiness and/or pleasure. That which is good is so because it is the attainment of highest



and re-appraising current practices and their delivery. There are a great many opinions and definitions of value. An important question in ethics is whether values are personal, and thus totally relative and subjective, or whether there are in fact shared universals. Are my desires and values, and the manner in which these influence my pedagogical emphasis and practice, necessarily valid; or more generally/universally valid? As Lombardo points out, the complexity of this territory is compounded by the fact that not all values are equally valuable; some values may (and should) be deemed more important than others (2011a: 11).

Bertrand Russel (in Hazlitt 2012: 22-23) recognised that there was a conflict between the desires of different people and even conflicting desires within a single individual at different times or even at the same time. How then, he wondered, could the desires of a single individual, let alone the contrasting desires of different people, be harmonised? As I reviewed my process and became increasingly versed in ethics through a review of literature on the subject, I questioned also whether, as an extension of my personal values and pedagogical orientation, the ethical concerns I identified during the course of this enquiry could have more than a personal validity. I drew some measure of reassurance from Lombardo in this regard, who, despite recent far-reaching support of cultural relativism, suggests that:

[W]e seem to have been misled by the propaganda of extreme individualism. As a species, we think and behave in very similar ways, and part of this commonality is in our values. It is simply not true that most of us believe or practice a philosophy of ‘anything goes’ or that one thing is as good as the next (2011a: 11).

He draws on the work of various social researchers such as Wendell Bell and Rushworth Kidder, and anthropologist Donald Brown, to support his argument that there are “‘human universals’ that exist despite personal and cultural diversity. These include: justice, peace, loyalty, courage, friendliness, trust, self-realization, autonomy, love, truthfulness, freedom, unity, tolerance, responsibility and respect for life. Perhaps most importantly, there is consensus regarding the ‘value of values’” (Lombardo 2011a: 11). Without such agreement, says Berlin (in Graham 2012), we would be hard pressed to understand and relate to one another<sup>113</sup>.

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excellence and that which is bad is so because of the lack of excellence. Or the highest value may be associated with harmony versus discord. That which is good increases harmony and that which is bad tends to toward discord. Closely associated with this view is the attribution of highest value to creation versus destruction. In *Human Society in Ethics and Politics* (1955), Bertrand Russell described “right” conduct in slightly different terms from the more conventional pleasure versus pain or happiness versus unhappiness orientation (in Hazlitt 2012: 23). He substituted the words “satisfaction” and “dissatisfaction” and advocated behaviour that would “produce the greatest balance of satisfaction over dissatisfaction, or the smallest balance of dissatisfaction over satisfaction” (in Hazlitt 2012: 23). Aristotle’s concept of *eudemonia* - which is derived from the Greek ‘*eudamonikos*’, meaning “producing happiness” or “conducive to happiness” - encapsulates for Hazlitt “health, happiness and wellbeing [sic]” and signifies for him the best refinement of that which holds the highest value (2012: 23). Lyall Watson sums up his understanding of Aristotelian ethics as follows: “If ‘good’ can be defined as that which encourages the integrity of the whole, then ‘evil’ becomes anything which disturbs or disrupts such completeness” (1995: 8).

<sup>113</sup> “I came to the conclusion that there is a plurality of ideals, as there is a plurality of cultures and of temperaments [...]. There is not an infinity of [values]: the number of human values, of values which I can pursue while maintaining my human semblance, my human character, is finite - let us say 74, or perhaps 122, or

Ultimately I returned to the focus of this study, which is to identify personal orientations as a preliminary point of departure. So personal desires and values will be the predominant influence on the ethical issues I identify. I make no claims to reach beyond this and in fact I am not trying to, in spite of support for notions of ‘universal’ virtues, values and desires. Armed with a thorough appraisal of personal truths I believe that I (and hopefully other educators) will be better equipped to situate my personal pedagogy in relation to others and/or a defined code of ethics; this next step would require dialogue with others in a particular context and this study aims no further than preparing for such an eventuality.

#### 4.2.4 Improvisation #3: Foregrounding and illuminating the salient in search of values

As a creative exercise, I returned to my answers in the questionnaire and conducted a narrative analysis in order to *emphasise certain words and phrases* (bold italicised text<sup>114</sup>) to denote *positive values* (aspirational and meaningful values - virtues) which I regard to be definitive of my personal ethos, and also *negative values* (items pointing to potential ethical concerns - vices) that arose as I wrote<sup>115</sup>. Re-reading *only* the bold italicised text or lifting (cutting and pasting) and sequencing it (as exemplified below) gives a gestalt impression of the overall views expressed. Repetition of certain words and recurring phrases emphasise where deep priorities lie. This creative exercise allowed me to observe essential features of my inner landscape beneath the rational flow of reasoned thoughts and structured ideas. I was seeking what I deeply *feel* to be true versus what I might *think* to be true. As examples I include the following positive and negative values as they emerged from within the same content<sup>116</sup>:

##### Positive values:

acceptance approval recognition mutual understanding tolerance integrity communal co-habitation  
 authentic unfolding tolerate human freedom intimacy freedom maturity consciousness  
 controls disciplines freedom parameters spontaneity discipline license limits  
 control security limitations guidelines productive opened mind true potentials drama theatre promise  
 freedom culture support new cultural formation meaning self-expression sacred revitalise engage  
 sacred inclusive order technique no-technique credibility true self system ethics personal investigation  
 self-confrontation understanding individual signified meaningful collective interconnected living  
 practicality real confrontation self-conditioning transcend freedom conditioning freedom human  
 liberation human potential

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27, but finite, whatever it may be. And the difference this makes is that if a man pursues one of these values, I, who do not, am able to understand why he pursues it or what it would be like, in his circumstances, for me to be induced to pursue it. Hence the possibility of human understanding” (Berlin in Graham 2012: 4).

<sup>114</sup> Different fonts or colours can also be used.

<sup>115</sup> Such analysis is a useful creative exercise in its own right and is one I used regularly to extract themes in both this questionnaire and in my *Ethics Evolution Journal* (Prigge 2014b).

<sup>116</sup> These values were extracted from my answer to the question: “*What influences have shaped my personal ethical orientations?*” in the *Personal Ethics Questionnaire*; see Addendum 1, question 7.

Negative values:

pervasive peer cultural pressure survival stereotyping opportunities suffered  
 ‘outsiders’ marginalised let go values cigarettes sexual freedom bad language ripe sexual innuendo  
 alcohol celebrated admired members counter-culture critical culture upbringing superior conforming  
 non-conformity limitation affront freedom  
 self-expression extreme individualism anything goes deviant behaviour unhealthy disrespecting life  
 loss connection culture lacked organisation dissolution culture non-culture experience meaningless  
 estrangement self disconnection self doubt not counterbalanced anarchists loss freedom reality life  
 freedom costs enslaved disharmony disorder lost existential sea caution narcissists self-obsessed  
 broken infantile rebellion self-worship lack technique insular cocoon  
 superficial microcosmic outlook self-serving

This exercise set up a clearly defined polarity or ‘opposition of forces’ and illuminated for me the tensions at work. I was granted insight into the paradoxical and contradictory nature of ethical enquiry which reinforced the ambiguity, uncertainty and complexity involved. Some words appear in both texts (such as ‘freedom’ or ‘self-expression’ above), thereby revealing that key concepts may contain both positive and negative potentials depending on how they are approached, understood or practiced. This exercise led to the inclusion of a question directly pertaining to values in the *Personal Ethics Questionnaire*<sup>117</sup>. Although this was not how I approached the task, I would suggest that it might prove even more useful to highlight salient concepts in the *Narrative of Personal Ethics* (Prigge 2014d) explained in the chapter to follow.

#### 4.2.5 Moral emotions and questionable desires

What became critical to my growing understanding regarding ethics is the recognition that our immediate moral or ethical responses or reactions are fundamentally rooted in the *emotional* and not the rational; and along with the source of our desires they are therefore largely inaccessible to our conscious minds (Matousek 2011: 7). Much of this self enquiry was aimed at raising unconscious dynamics to the level of consciousness. Hence, during my exploration of memory through *recapitulation* I realised the need to more clearly articulate what signals or cues I was using to guide me toward past experiences that might hold ethical concern. This led to the inclusion in my ethics questionnaire of the following question:

***Q: How would I personally identify unsound, unsafe or ethically contentious practices? Note: If I search my memory and experience, what signals am I seeking that may alert me to unsound practices/behaviours: as an educator (director/choreographer); and on the part of my own (past and or present) educators (and directors/choreographers)?*** (Prigge 2014c: 38)<sup>118</sup>.

<sup>117</sup> See Addendum 1, question 12.

<sup>118</sup> I followed this with the corollary: “***Q: How would I personally identify good or sound ethical practices?*** (Prigge 2014c: 38). *Note:* the questions cited here are the ones I originally used and due to subsequent editing and refinement of the questionnaire presented in Addendum 1, they now differ slightly in the final version. See Addendum 1, questions 37 and 38.

Many of the ‘signals’ I identified had an emotional orientation. I had to ask whether this was a valid basis upon which to seek out ethical concerns, and following this lead, in Trawling Phase 2 I sought out literature to assist my understanding. As an intuitionist approach, Moral Foundation Theory explains the “moral emotions” as:

[R]apid, automatic reactions people have to violations of what they take to be a shared moral order. There is not just one moral intuition - a general flash of ‘wrongness’ - just as there is not one taste receptor on the tongue whose output tells us ‘delicious!’ Rather [...] there are a variety of rapid, automatic reactions to patterns in the social world. When we detect such patterns, moral modules fire, and a fully enculturated person has an affectively-valenced experience. Not just a feeling of ‘good!’ or ‘bad!’, but an experience with a more specific ‘flavor’ to it, such as ‘cruel!’, ‘unfair!’, ‘betrayal!’, ‘subversive!’, or ‘sick!’ (Graham et al. 2012: 37).

According to Matousek (2011:45), emotions that stem from “personal preference” and “prejudice” are “too self-referential to be morally sound”; liking, wanting or desiring something is a poor basis for sound moral judgment or decision-making. *Moral* emotions, however, are the glue that allows society to cohere and form secure relations through commitments to shared values (Matousek 2011: 45). Haidt (in Matousek 2011: 45) proposes four categories or “families” of moral emotions, summarised as: 1. Other-condemning: anger, contempt and disgust; 2. Self-conscious: shame, embarrassment and guilt; 3. Other-suffering: compassion; 4. Other-praising: gratitude and elevation.

Research led me to understand that emotions originate within the most ancient part of the human brain: the limbic system. It is apparently for this reason that we may at times experience “moral dumbfounding”, a term used by Haidt to describe the experience of a strong moral reaction without our being able to rationalise its existence (in Matousek 2011: 7). It also means that these moral emotions or intuitive/instinctive reactions are not necessarily always right or ethical within the contemporary milieu or a given social context. The neocortex is our most recent evolutionary adaptation and it is the site of reason, language, vision, imagination and analysis. Making ethical choices requires negotiation and interaction between these brain regions; the old interfacing with the new (Matousek 2011: 5). However, as Matousek suggests, being the latest addition to our human “gadgetry”, the neocortex is slow compared to the limbic system; it is a region where there is a great deal of malfunction and it is motivationally weaker: “if you’ve ever tried talking yourself out of a strong feeling, you know that this is true” (2011: 23).

Philosopher William Irvine describes the relationship between the intellect and the emotions as being “asymmetrical” (2006: 76). The intellect can only exert an influence over the emotions through the power of persuasion in which case it has to come up with a solution toward suppressing an emotion that holds a *greater* emotional charge. He goes on to explain that while the intellect can easily come up with or create desires, they remain “feeble” and simply lack the kind of raw intention or motivating power the limbic brain is capable of generating; this means that “the resulting desire will be stillborn”

(2006: 76). Irvine likens the interaction between the intellect and the emotions or desires as being “like the relationship between parents and their headstrong five-year-old. Such a child knows what he wants and will demand, whine, and whimper until he gets it” (2006: 77). It is for this reason that “[d]epressed individuals rarely respond to logic”, he says, illustrating the point clearly (2006: 81).

The decisions and choices we make are not necessarily irrational in the conventional sense, but the means by which outcomes are reached differs vastly from the step-by-step process required, for example, when working out the timetable for the upcoming semester. The actual way in which decisions are made apparently occurs according to some “unknown process” in the unconscious mind: “What transpires in that moment is a mystery” (Irvine 2006: 111). When we come up with a solution, we only recognise it *after* it has occurred (Irvine 2006: 107, Matousek 2011: 9). Once a decision has been made, our conscious mind merely takes credit for it: “‘Good idea. That must be what I want to do,’ it mutters” (Irvine 2006: 111). Wegner suggests that despite knowing all of this, humanity still strongly embraces the concept of “conscious agency”, possibly because of social pressure; if we can’t explain why we did something we may be perceived as “asleep, drugged or crazy” (in Irvine 2006: 110). At the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century biologist Thomas H. Huxley referred to humans as “conscious automata” (in Irvine 2006: 117). Influential and contentious spiritual teacher of the 20<sup>th</sup> century George Gurdjieff referred to the majority of humanity as “mechanical”, devoid of the true power of choice or will (Ouspensky 1986: 16). In 1921 Bertrand Russell suggested that “the discovery of our own motives can only be made by the same process by which we discover other people’s, namely, the process of observing our actions and inferring the desire which could prompt them” (in Irvine 2006: 118). This strongly motivates the need to question our desires.

Irvine points out that despite the common understanding that Instrumental values are considered more rational than Preference values, the truth is that the outcome must eventually be a terminal ‘hedonic’ (pleasurable) desire (2006: 80). “Had the emotions not formed the terminal desire in question, none of the associated instrumental desires would have been formed by the intellect” (2006: 80). The emotions provide the charge or impulse and the intellect then creates chains of desire, or chains of instrumental actions with associated values, in order to achieve the end goal. And the end goal is generally, from a biological standpoint at least, the avoidance of pain or the achievement of pleasure. “[T]he intellect cannot command the emotions to commit. Emotional commitment has a life of its own: it either happens or it doesn’t (2006: 74)”. And without emotional commitment or some sort of motivation, there is no fuel to action.

This does not mean that we are entirely at the mercy of our desires or our intuitive (Haidt and Joseph 2006) or innate ethical (or non-ethical) responses. Just because I have a desire for recognition that may historically have prompted me to behave in a servile and conformist manner, and I may have made choices that compromised my ethical integrity, does not mean I can’t change. A key to understanding

this lies in how the term ‘innate’ is defined. Haidt and Joseph favour the definition offered by Gary Marcus whose specialisation is the study of developmental pathways whereby genes dictate the construction of brains. In Marcus’ model the genes lay down a “first draft” of the brain, and it is subsequent experience that then revises and “edits” this template (Haidt and Joseph 2006: 8):

Nature bestows upon the newborn a considerably complex brain, but one that is best seen as prewired - flexible and subject to change - rather than hardwired, fixed, and immutable [...], ‘built-in’ does not mean unmalleable; it means organized in advance of experience (Marcus in Haidt and Joseph 2006: 8).

This subsequent ‘editing’ is still governed by genetic processes, but this does not imply that it is beyond manipulation. It is here that the nurture aspect of ethics, or ethical education, has its role to play; and what is perhaps most important to realise is that we are granted a boon by nature - as humans we have an inherent desire to learn, as well as a “desire to choose” which is “so innate that we act on it even before we can express it” (Iyengar 2011: 9). This supports the validity of investigating the desires that drive us through ethical self enquiry in general, and in this particular case through self-interview.

Personally speaking this entire study and enquiry involved ‘making a stand’ for what have been evolving reactions or responses to ethically contentious and questionable practices. This is both literally and symbolically an act of embracing a greater degree of personal autonomy or moral agency. Furthermore, my experience has been such that the scrutiny of my personal desires and the opportunity to see myself more clearly reflected through the various practices I engaged (and even now in the words unfolding on the page as part of this *Performed Narrative*) has led to a greater acceptance of self, reducing the need I feel for recognition from others. Standing for what we believe in may put us at risk and make us vulnerable, but it may also strengthen our ethical or moral character.

From all this I can recognise that desire may lead us astray, but in the case of moral emotions and desires that motivate us to become more ethical, it can equally guide us to where we yet have work to do by *intuitively* leading us to potential ethical concerns. The questions I posed myself in the questionnaire allowed me to begin to unravel and make sense of some of my motives; they assisted me with recognising what ethical choices I make, and why. By extension I was better able to understand what I was looking for when it came to identifying which of my past experiences in performance and its education might hold ethical import. The fact that most of my choices were based on moral emotions at work does not necessarily imply that they are ‘right’ or ‘wrong’, but I learnt that additional reflection may be necessary to prevent knee-jerk judgments and reactions. Drawing our deeper drives and desires to the surface of consciousness can equip us to be better prepared when faced with complex decision making. Similarly, a purely rational approach that discredits the validity and relevance of moral emotions is not necessarily sensitive to all of the dynamics at play.



#### 4.2.6 Observing the memes: acknowledging the power of epigenetic evolution, morphic field theory and encultured metaphors

To recall, in Chapter One I mentioned that it may be necessary for educators to consciously identify, define and revise the ‘organisational habitus’ or the ideational foundation of performance and its education in order to address ethical concerns<sup>119</sup>.

The ideas we ascribe to, and permit to proliferate in our sphere of influence, are described by ethologist and evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins as “memes”. Dawkins proposes that ideas themselves represent the birth of a more rapid form of cultural evolution, and in the same manner that genes are transmitted from body to body, memes are fragments of information that are transmitted from brain to brain (Watson 1995: 193). The significance of this for a study in ethics, and in specific relation to the value of the *Personal Ethics Questionnaire*, is a recognition that memes are bits of information that have an epigenetic force (Watson 1995, Matousek 2011) and relate to what is known as epigenetic evolution. As touched on previously, while the brain is now understood to be genetically pre-wired (but not hard-wired), epigenetic evolution explains how genes require stimuli in order to be activated or switched on and off; and these stimuli invariably come from the outside (McTaggart 2011: 30)<sup>120</sup>. What this orientation invites us to consider is that morality and ethics are not simply a conversation between the self (identity) and the society in which it functions (organisational habitus), but also a reciprocal exchange between our genetic hardwiring and our environment.

Viewed in this light, memes become living structures capable of implanting themselves in another mind like viruses which parasitise the genetic mechanism of the host cell. And, like viruses, they are forced to compete with one another in a truly Darwinian fashion, struggling for access to the most successful minds and bodies. To do this, they have to demonstrate that they have survival value in the new environment provided by human culture (Watson 1995: 193).

Furthermore, this knowledge reinforces the argument for ethics as being educable, and that it is a matter of managing and shaping the kind of influences we expose ourselves to that can play a significant role in this process. The ideas and information we are influenced by, and the relationships and stimuli in our environment, all play a part in activating or silencing (switching on or off) parts of our moral genetic heritage for good or ill. Our ideas about what is good or bad are like codes that can stimulate our genetic predisposition or mute it.

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<sup>119</sup> To review, see Section 1.2.

<sup>120</sup> “Epigenetics and adaptive evolution [...] display something remarkable about how we take physical form. The relationship between a living thing and its environment is a two-way, ongoing conversation. Although much of that conversation is set down early in our lives, it is dynamic, fluid, even reversible - a relationship for life. We are a balance of internal and external influences, early and late programming, constantly transformed by the influence of every moment” (McTaggart 2011: 42).



During the course of literary research I also discovered British botanist Rupert Sheldrake's Morphic Field Theory which sheds interesting and important light on this territory. The theory suggests that patterns linking all of life create pools which are not made up of genes but rather of successful *habits* that, through repetition and ritualisation make them more and more likely to appear by "chance" (Watson 1995: 135). Sheldrake's theory, like that of Dawkins, proposes that ideas are "evolutionary units in their own right" (Watson 1995: 236)<sup>121</sup>.

Watson explains that culture is in effect a kind of organism that can take on a diversity of forms that adapt and mutate through a process of natural selection of memes. Jung suggested something similar: that ideas have an archetypal nature and that "[t]hey are [...] in a sense the deposits of all our ancestral experiences" (in Watson 1995: 236). The memes or the ideas we choose to emphasise and reinforce, are thus central to ethical and moral development, education and practice. Memes and morphic field theory explain how religions and rituals gain longevity through repeated performance. Morphic field theory explains how, to my deep interest and curiosity, it is possible for many of the themes or suggested ethical considerations I uncovered in my research process in South Africa are mirrored in the research conducted by Seton in the United Kingdom and Australia, at a geographical remove. As Watson observes, morphic fields 'leap' "not just from individual to individual, but from species to species across gaps of both space and time. They pass, not just from ancestors to their descendants, but also move sideways from one group of organisms to another, even if these others live on different continents" (1996: 235). Morphic Field Theory thus adds credibility to the proposal that subjective and personally identified ethical considerations may have a broader value.

It also explains how a particular habitus passes on a cultural memory of attitude sets, and ideas associated with them, from one generation of students and teachers to the next. For me such theories throw new light on how Seton's concept of "formation and habituation" (2010: 9) in performance education might actually operate. As mentioned in Chapter One, if certain practices are deemed unethical, then the very ideas that support their life and transmission must be questioned and altered - re-directed. What this suggests is that confronting ethics calls for the creation of new understandings, terms and discourse; or, ultimately, the re-definition and re-framing of existing paradigms. A new paradigm, however, will have to foster and promote memes that demonstrate "that they have survival value in the new environment" (Watson 1995: 193). Simply changing practices is not in and of itself enough. Attitudes to, and perceptions about, practices and behaviours in the habitus of performance and its education must also change: *what* and *how* must mutually evolve.

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<sup>121</sup> Watson illustrates morphic field theory by explaining how zebras and wildebeest culturally (and not genetically) inherit a "route map" for annual migration (1995: 236). This is the transmission of a form of cultural memory. "It is possible[...] that memory is inherent in all of nature, and if we find that we are indeed living in such a world, we shall have to change our way of thinking entirely" (Sheldrake in Watson 1995: 236).

Besides offering insight into my ethical journey (my narrative or story) and the evolution of my personal ethos, the questionnaire proved useful as a means of identifying and exploring the memes I feel are active in the culture of performance and its education - that are prevalent in the discourse which defines the culture and which I (as an educator and representative) use and/or have historically used. For example, some of the memes I identified in my self-interview process were those of ‘self-sacrifice’ or ‘martyrdom’ in the name of, or in service of, art (Prigge 2014d: 25)<sup>122</sup>. These memes have deep roots in the craft of performance (Bates 1987, Harrop 1992). Such memes might create all manner of licenses and transgressions of limits. They might grant educators freedoms to push students way beyond what is necessary or *needed* in the satisfaction of various desires or expected outcomes in the educational context. Students may inadvertently put up with treatment that is unethical and unsafe in order to prove their commitment and dedication: they might fear that exhibiting an unwillingness to ‘go all the way’ in this regard may impact their grades (Szlawieniec-Haw 2012: 27); or, they may fear an impact on their person, motivated as they might be by the desires of “ability, recognition and reward”<sup>123</sup> identified by Seton (2007: 2).

In the work of Charles Taylor can be found what I believe is a strong correlate for the notion of organisational habitus, which expanded my understanding of this territory. What he refers to as the “social imaginary” encapsulates “the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations” (2004: 23). As Brinkman explains (2008: 405), the social imaginary is a “lived” reality, not a “cluster of intellectual ideas we employ when we think about social relations”, but rather what determines “how we formulate such social theories”. The term ‘imaginary’ is employed because the way in which we relate to and engage with our environment is carried out largely through “images, stories, and legends” (Taylor 2004: 23)<sup>124</sup>. Or, in Dawkins’s cosmology: *memes*.

Taylor’s work, suggests Brinkman (2008: 405), represents part of a “practice turn” in hermeneuticism which calls for the understanding that it is our background associations and assumptions that empower us to act. In fact, our “wider grasp of our whole predicament: how we stand to each other, how we got to where we are, how to relate to other groups, and so on” (Taylor 2004: 25), is what “grounds even our background understandings of practices” (Brinkman 2008: 405). Practices are held together by a common understanding, and this common understanding is what the notion of the social imaginary is intended to capture (Brinkman 2008: 405-406). In Taylor’s view, because the social imaginary is “*lived* rather than *thought*”, it is built on *embodied* practices rather than socially regulated imperatives

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<sup>122</sup> Antonin Artaud in particular “suggested that actors should be like martyrs, burning alive but signalling through the flames” (Harrop 1992: 76).

<sup>123</sup> See *Parables* 1, 2, 5, 9, 14 and 16, and suggested ethical considerations 1-9 in Chapter 7.

<sup>124</sup> I am aware of several “images, stories and legends” passed on to me directly by educators delineating their own experience and/or those of great ‘names’ in the industry that speak directly to the memes of ‘self-sacrifice’ or ‘martyrdom’ in the name of art. The *Parable Charlie* contains a specific example - see Chapter 7.

such as rules or codes of conduct<sup>125</sup>. “Certain moral self-understandings are embedded in certain practices, which can mean both that they are promoted by the spread of these practices and that they shape the practices and help them get established” (Taylor 2004: 63). This understanding throws additional light on Seton’s (2010: 9) observation that educators might be caught up in “a continuum of formation and habituation”.

[I]t is not necessarily a conscious intention of the teachers to require the ultimate submission of students. After all, most acting teachers were, themselves, ‘initiated’ into the same craft by the same tradition. So it is understandable that they believe that their students must likewise be transformed in some way through adopting a particular training process - “if it was good enough for me, it’s good enough for them” (Seton 2007: 2).

Seton observes that certain ethically contentious practices and techniques (2007: 1-2) “are experienced as ‘natural’ or ‘normal’ within the field of actor training”; how this situation can come to pass is to a large extent explained by the organisational habitus and social imaginary. One of the key suggested ethical considerations I uncovered in this study, and which is to be found in the work of Burgoyne et al. (1999), Seton (2009, 2010) and Szlawieniec-Haw (2012), is that performers may not feel comfortable questioning the way practices are constituted or delivered because they are afraid of jeopardizing their competence; or that the entire social imaginary or organisational habitus of performance and its education is engineered around a culture of willing submission and conformity, following direction unconditionally and without question or resistance<sup>126</sup>.

The idea of ‘non-questioning’ was a meme I identified in my self-interview process that encapsulates this (Prigge 2014d: 28). In an interview Seton conducted with Dr. Ross Prior, the Principal Lecturer in Acting and Drama at the University of Northampton, Prior suggested that while university students might be encouraged toward being critically rigorous or sceptical, that it was important to still consider that:

[I]t’s not useful for actors, necessarily, to be sceptical in that sense - [...] a lot of their work is built on trust and belief. And, if you’re sceptical of your training and of your trainer then you’re really not going to develop your craft - it still is a craft, a whole skill set that you’ve got to develop (in Seton 2009: 22).

This resonates strongly with my experiences as both a student and educator. The social imaginary, says Brinkman, “determines which questions we can meaningfully ask about our social existence” - and by implication, therefore, which ones we *cannot* ask - “and it affects the explicit ideas we form of society and ourselves” (2008: 405). In the culture of performance and its education this may mean becoming servile (and thus ethically and/or morally vulnerable) by not asking questions at all<sup>127</sup>. “In

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<sup>125</sup> Emphases in original.

<sup>126</sup> See *Parables* 1, 2, 11 and 14, and suggested ethical concerns 1-9 in Chapter 7.

<sup>127</sup> See *Parables* 14 and 15, and suggested ethical consideration 34 Chapter 7.

order for actors to be able to speak” says Szlawieniec-Haw (2012: 25), “there must be the space for them to be heard. Otherwise, when speaking does occur, it may be ignored, dismissed, or even punished, leaving performers less likely to be open in the future”. In the safe space of a journal or an ethics questionnaire it becomes possible to begin speaking up, sometimes for the first time. Granted, this is not the same as a group situation, but it does hold the potential for honouring moral emotions and feelings that might be suppressed or even repressed in other contexts. Deeply entrenched memes of ‘self sacrifice’ or ‘martyrdom’ and ‘non-questioning’ explain why I found the self-interview process so exhausting and nauseating, why I felt like I was trying to move against a tide as my process of raising questions placed me in opposition to the culture that had shaped me<sup>128</sup>.

Brinkman explains that the social imaginary is a hermeneutic discourse that does not “dissolve individual human identity and subjectivity in a sea of discursive practices,” but it invites us “to look first and foremost to the constitutive background of history, practices, and the social imaginary that enables humans to have what we call identities” (2008: 406). This offers what I perceive to be significant support and validation for the entire process of ethical self enquiry and the self-interview technique in particular. It grants further insight into the discomfort I experienced during the process of self-interview; questioning background assumptions cannot be separated from a questioning of personal identity. And what is also important about Taylor’s ideas in so far as the proposal of ethical self-enquiry as a preparatory or pre-dialogue process is concerned, is that the social imaginary invites a reappraisal of the entire field of social science because it emphatically casts the researcher as a self-interpreting being, “unable to completely leap out of his or her own self-interpretations” (Brinkman 2008: 406). This offers a ground upon which the value of subjectively identified ethical concerns might be granted a broader relevance. Furthermore, it reinforces for me the need to emphasise intuitive, virtue and situation-based models of ethics in education (*embodied* ethics) especially with regard to the development of autonomous moral agency. It also supports my emphasis on the use of autoethnographic, performative, narrative, arts-based and artistic research practices/methods for ethical self enquiry, precisely because of their capacity to grant access to such “self-interpretations”.

One of the things that make memes highly adaptable and contagious is human diversity. As Matousek suggests: “[n]o two people make identical ethical choices because no two brains are exactly alike” (2011: 8). Memes can mutate and change incredibly fast because each human mind “plays the same tune a little differently” (Watson 1995: 194). Again this supports my intuition that the key lies in personal moral agency and personal accountability as educators. We are not victims of the momentums of existing structures; as individuals we can make changes that influence the collective. The optimal time for useful replication or passing on new memes is when we are still very young and open to new information, but neural plasticity with its recent offer of the potential for lifelong learning and change suggests that the window of opportunity may never fully close and that it can be opened

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<sup>128</sup> To review see Section 4.2.1.

ever wider with practice and effort. ‘Old’ performance educators can be taught ‘new’ tricks and pass these on to the young minds they influence.

A key to this lies in narrative: we can review our stories and change the memes we choose to use when telling them. We need our automatic system with its modules and heuristics to guide us because without them we would simply freeze every time we were confronted with an ethical dilemma; but we need to be responsible about what we put into it, how we program it. Self interview is an excellent mechanism for observing such programming. “This world will be more to our liking,” writes Ferguson (2005: 164) “as an ever greater number of people ask questions and talk about their truths”. Matousek invites us to consider that narratives, especially fiction and parables, are a heuristic device humanity uses to pass on ancient wisdom and that “[o]ur ethical repertoires are widened by imagination” (2011: 85). The contents of the stories we tell, the fashions, the fads, the way in which we describe ourselves, are all shaped by us and in turn shape us. The words and ideas used in the culture of performance and its education in turn create and sustain it.

To recall, in Chapter Two Levy (1997: 65) referred to Aristotle’s understanding that virtues are habits which must be cultivated through repeated experience<sup>129</sup>. This is echoed by Fesmire who furthermore points to the relevance and necessity of reaching a deeper understanding of the cognitive processes that underpin “encultured metaphors” (1999: 533). Understanding the influence that the metaphors we use and ascribe to regarding moral issues and concepts has on our moral deliberations is, in his view, a guide to ensuring that we own our habits so that they do not own us (1999: 533).

“Habits are arts,” Dewey explains. Just as an artist’s medium (canvas, brushes, pigments, marble, etc.) has definite features that the good artist must perceive and work with, so our social environment is recalcitrant yet not wholly intransigent. It kicks back yet does not utterly refuse to be transformed. We must adjust to and reconstruct this environment if it is to support us. If it changes, habits must do likewise. This is one reason sets of moral laws are maladaptive (Fesmire 2003: 17).

‘Self-sacrifice’ and ‘martyrdom’, to draw on these examples once more, may well be considered metaphors for the performer’s role as servant to society, and of art<sup>130</sup> (Harrop 1992: 108). If such metaphors become habit (memes) there is no doubt that they can have deleterious implications. Understanding such memes and metaphors, and how we individually interpret, understand, are influenced by, and in turn perpetuate them, is critical to the process of nurturing a constructive versus destructive ethic in performance and its education. This requires questioning - personally and collectively - the habits of discourse that form the ideational substrate of the culture of performance and its education.

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<sup>129</sup> Chapter 2, section 2.2.5.

<sup>130</sup> See *Parable 17* in Chapter 7.

#### 4.2.7 Inhibition and the virtue (or vice) of habit

If indeed “habits are arts” as Dewey (in Fesmire 2003: 17) proclaims, then finding ways to inhibit our habitual reactions is critical to improving the ethics of our pedagogy. I find that self-interview is an undeniably powerful inhibitory mechanism because questioning is, in and of itself, an inhibitory response that creates a pause, or to return to Levy’s (1997: 73) terminology a “millisecond of neural static”<sup>131</sup> that can be widened with practice.

Matousek (2011: 84-85) explains how morality is largely an unconscious process which correlates to how the immune system develops and how language acquisition takes place. While the immune system has the potential to respond to a diversity of molecules, it is limited by locking on to a narrow scope through early exposure. Similarly, while the human brain has the capacity to learn an array of languages, repetitive exposure to the mother tongue leads to fixation on the first language learnt. “[T]he moral system could respond to any number of stimuli, but fixes on the ones that most directly affect our lives, choosing our battles in a world filled with competing interests” (Matousek 2011: 85). Our personal ethos or internal ethical guidance system becomes increasingly relegated to the automatic system of functioning, because, as psychologist Marc Hauser explains: “If every time you were confronted with a moral issue, you had to work it through, you would do nothing else” (in Matousek 2011: 85).

Alexander Technique practitioner and author Glenn Park confirms that a great deal of our behaviour is governed by habit, and necessarily so, because it would be “impossible to survive if we did not have the ability to operate automatically, responding to stimuli in a learned habitual way” (1989: 13). This frees our mind to focus on other matters; moreover, habit allows us to learn new skills (1989: 13), such as ethical virtuosity or *moral artistry*<sup>132</sup>. However, this automatic or habitual conditioning becomes a significant stumbling block when we wish to revise or alter our responses to, and functioning within, ourselves and the environment. To change, says Park, “*we have once again to start consciously thinking about how we are doing something*, and then we come up against the power of our habits” (1989: 13)<sup>133</sup>. However, the mere focus of attention on what has been relegated to ‘autopilot’ is a shift that begins the process of moving to a more manual orientation<sup>134</sup>. Before unlearning habits, observes Park, we must first know what they are (1989: 13).

Self-interview can be a means to interrogate and identify our ethical repertoire and our fixated behaviours, biases, discriminations and prejudices. Moreover, if questioning becomes a new habit in

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<sup>131</sup> Chapter 2, section 2.3.

<sup>132</sup> For further insight into the concept of *moral artistry*, see Chapter 8.

<sup>133</sup> Emphasis in original.

<sup>134</sup> To recall, in Chapter 2 Siegel (in Callahan 2007: 4-7) explained neural plasticity as a process of directing or re-directing attention in order to create new neural pathways; which can become new automatic neural configurations or ‘modules’ over time, given sufficient practice or rehearsal. See Chapter 2, section 2.2.5.



itself we stand the opportunity to delay or inhibit our knee-jerk automatic responses and create a space in which new neural pathways might be rewired. To begin with, self-observation free from the notions of ‘good’ or ‘bad’, ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ is necessary (Park 1989: 13). ‘Saying it like it is’ and ‘seeing it like it is’ without fear of the judgement of others and without granting our own internal editor a space to encroach is critical. Self-interview, like journaling, can go some way to providing such space. This also supports my intuition to conduct personal research and ‘seclude’ and ‘immerse’ myself in personal *resources* before being exposed to the ideas of others<sup>135</sup>.

Park (1989: 13) explains that simply noticing what is *there* is an inhibitory act; observance of what and how we think, feel and do is “one of the first skills involved in the art of changing”. “The physiological function of inhibition is to allow any animal to organise itself to respond in a co-ordinated and integrated way to a stimulus” (Park 1989: 13) and this should become part of our continuous thinking process and a conscious habit. Thinking ethically and questioning the ethicality of practices should become a new habit that might break the “continuum of formation and habituation” that Seton describes (2010: 9). Inhibition in the sense Alexander used it, and the manner I am using it here, is not a Freudian repressive fixing, but rather a “freeing mechanism” which allows for more “conscious creative activity” (Park 1989: 13). One of the dangers of imposing duty or rule-based ethical systems in an outside-in fashion is that they may lead to inhibition that is more of a repression or suppression of impulses, rather than the liberation of autonomous moral agency. Key to developing moral agency and promoting natural moral maturation is, I argue, the practicing of the inhibitory response: “Without inhibition the entire attempt to change one’s habitual behaviour becomes quite redundant and meaningless” (Park 1989: 13).

The power of inhibition lies in the fact that it creates the possibility that we might begin to operate from *choice* as opposed to *habit*, which is why Alexander saw it as holding *evolutionary* potential; a means whereby humanity might take control of its “destiny in a meaningful way” (Park 1989: 13). Based on my personal experience I would say that self-interview may thus be a critical practice in the *evolution* of sound ethics in drama, theatre and performance education.

#### 4.2.8 Self-interview as a dialogue with sub selves

One of the purposes of the *Personal Ethics Questionnaire* was to attempt to observe and identify different tones and voices as indicative of different subselves in my inner ensemble of characters. In effect, self-interview is a form of dialogue with the self; for example, the rational self may devise probing, orderly questions designed to yield specific or intentional outcomes. Through a relaxing of the habitual filters that usually constrain our responses, or the internal editor or critic that monitors our social identity and expressions in order to protect our image of self, we can speak freely and often in a

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<sup>135</sup> To review see Chapter 1, section 1.6.2.



diversity of voices. This grants a ‘window’ for more marginalised voices (inner characters, sub-characters or archetypes) to emerge and be given a chance to take the limelight; perhaps even to express themselves for the very first time.

This means that we inevitably have to confront the multiplicity of self which threatens the myth of a singular, coherent, autonomous or undivided identity (Ferguson 2005, Gecas 1982, Browning and Boudès 2005), and shatters “the illusion of mental unity” (Tinnin 1990: 154). This can be frightening. It reveals our hypocrisy and the diversity of inner agendas at work within us. Act 1 Scene 12 of *ACTivation: Playing Your Self* was titled “In-Terror-Gate”<sup>136</sup> (Prigge 2005: 120), which plays on the understanding that it requires courage to sincerely question ourselves and our actions and behaviours. However, if we have the requisite courage to progress into our ‘inner labyrinth’ it becomes a gateway from which we might emerge deeply transformed. As the Islamic Scripture (cited in Ferguson 2005: 131) goes: “There are two wars, the Little War and the Great War. The Little War occurs in the World. The Great War occurs within you”.

I found the process of ‘in-terror-gating’ myself/selves through the use of the Personal Ethics Questionnaire to be a means of reaching a greater coherence within myself. It was a process that assisted the formation of a better arrangement of my inner subselves, or as Ferguson (2005: 166) puts it, a “strengthening” of my “inner democracy” that allowed for some degree of truce between my “competing selves”. It supported my attempts to find out “who is in the control room” (Ferguson 2005: 166). Based on my own experience I would suggest that the result is also a simultaneous acceptance of other. Recognising our own inner multiplicity demands a corresponding acceptance and recognition that if it is so for us, then it must necessarily also be so for others. We are all divided and for each of us the greatest challenge is the inner war between opposing factions of self<sup>137</sup>.

#### **4.3 Gathering in the net: self-interview as an ethical self enquiry practice**

The self interview I conducted through the ethics questionnaire allowed me to observe what I have tended to choose over time and why I did so. This allowed me to begin to identify what I value more or less highly and granted me insight into my personal ethos as defined by personal attributions of worth. My answers to the question<sup>138</sup> designed to extract how I have historically engaged with ethical concerns, and the strategies I have implemented in my career thus far to address ethical considerations,

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<sup>136</sup> “In - Terror - Gate: through the terror of going within, a gateway to freedom opens to us” (Prigge 2005: 126).

<sup>137</sup> “If we find it difficult to change ourselves we can hardly expect society to change. Society, in other words, is a collection of people all too much like us. But we can fight fire with fire. Rather than struggling to overthrow the inner bureaucracy we can use our automating mechanisms to create - and reinforce - positive patterns and behaviour [sic]” (Ferguson 2005: 56).

<sup>138</sup> See Addendum 1, question 3.

were most illuminating with regard to observing the evolution of the ethical choices I have made, and as reflective of a personal growth curve and ethical maturational.

Haidt and Joseph point out that because virtues are understood to be the development of a ‘second nature’ through practice, discipline and effort, this in fact situates virtues as “closely connected” to the intuitive or automatic system (2006: 21). They suggest that Aristotle may well have been a forerunner of contemporary understandings of moral science, in that “the mind, like the brain itself, is a network that gets tuned up gradually by experience. With training, the mind does a progressively better job of recognizing important patterns of input and of responding with the appropriate pattern of output” (2006: 21). They agree with certain virtue theorists who contend that character or personality ‘traits’ are not simply “broad behavioural dispositions” but rather “situation specific *skills or capacities*” (2006: 20)<sup>139</sup>. So while virtues themselves are not necessary genetically passed on, the genetic ability to acquire, train or express them is. Self-interview may be a means to begin such training through practicing inhibition or questioning.

Nietzsche’s philosophy touches a similar vein which intuitively hints at neural plasticity: “[w]e have to *learn to think differently* - in order at last, perhaps very late on, to attain even more: *to feel differently*”<sup>140</sup> (Nietzsche 1982: 104). The neocortex allows us to “have feelings about our feelings” (Matousek 2011: 23), which means that we can adjust our innate value system by defining and refining through contemplation and consideration which feelings and their associated memes and values we wish to emphasise individually and collectively. The virtues of a person or industry (‘sphere of existence’) ultimately reflect their moral or ethical *character* and signify embodied values which might be deemed desirable or admirable (Lombardo 2011a: 4). Lombardo (2011a: 4) explains that this is where the relation of virtues to values and desires becomes apparent, and where important distinctions must be made when choosing which values to promote or aspire toward. The desire to express or pursue certain values may result in vices rather than virtues; not all values lead to the development of virtue<sup>141</sup>.

Without the hard science to back up his view, Aristotle distinguished between “acquired” or acculturated desires and “natural” desires (human nature) (Watson 1995: 7). Our morality is “rooted in our tissues” (Watson 1995: 8) and it also something that we learn. It is “innate *and* highly dependent on environmental influences” (Graham et. al. 2012: 8)<sup>142</sup>. While our orientations toward value are to a large extent inherited, we also do have a reflective system that allows us to choose. We are not simply

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<sup>139</sup> Emphases in original.

<sup>140</sup> Emphases in original.

<sup>141</sup> “There are though values that if pursued and practiced lead to recognizable virtues. Valuing truth leads to honesty, integrity, and courage; valuing justice leads to fair-mindedness; valuing freedom and self-determination leads to self-responsibility and autonomy; valuing others leads to respectfulness, compassion, and kindness. These character traits are generally valued around the world and have positive effects on one’s life” (2011a: 4).

<sup>142</sup> Emphasis in original.

at the mercy of our genes. We can, as Irvine asserts, “cheat” or go against the wishes of our “evolutionary master” (2006: 290); or as psychologist and evolutionary systems scientist David Loye suggests: “we are not just what we more or less dutifully adapt to. Much more importantly, *we are what we refuse to adapt to*” (2001: 130)<sup>143</sup>. It is up to us to determine how we will respond to our evolutionary heritage. While we are to some significant degree bound by evolutionary imperatives, these imperatives do not have the final say. There is a relationship between our automatic and controlled systems; between science and philosophy. We are capable of seeing the bigger picture. Out of all creation only humans are capable of being “conscious of the grounds upon which we propose to act *as grounds*” (Matousek 2011: 50)<sup>144</sup>. We may not be able to control the origination of our gut-impulses, desires and emotions, but we can decide whether to give in to them and be ruled by them, or how best to respond to them if at all. We can decide what we ought to value more highly and aspire towards such potential.

According to Chippendale, where both morals and ethics “constrain”, values “motivate” (2001: 1). Choosing which values we wish to reinforce as memes in the social imaginary or organisational habitus of performance and its education could literally transform the landscape.

Looked at in this way, good and evil are not a matter of taste or fashion, like or dislike. They are ideas rooted in our tissues. They are forces subject to natural law and should be assessed only on their affect, on what they add or subtract from what the Greeks called *eudaimonia*. This is usually translated as ‘happiness’, but that fails to convey the whole meaning of something that includes an active component, a sense of movement towards a goal. ‘Wellbeing’ is perhaps closer to what Aristotle had in mind as the aim of a good life. Reading between his lines, it looks less like ‘survival of the fittest’ and more like ‘the fitting of as many as possible to survive’ (Watson 1995: 8).

The key to mastering our ethical development lies ultimately in understanding how we have been ‘fitted’ and taking best advantage of it. This means being educated to play ourselves well, with virtuosity; to become *moral artists*. So do we have free will? If we are entirely ruled by an automatic evolutionary agenda, then the entire discussion of ethics is rendered moot. I tend to concur with Irvine who turns to philosopher David Hume’s opinion for solace on this matter:

[C]ontrary to popular opinion, the claim that our choices are causally determined is compatible with the claim that we have free will. For Hume, a choice is made freely if, when we make it, we feel that we have alternatives open to us and can choose among them. Even though our wiring determines the choices we make, those choices are free as long as they are preceded by an appropriate choice making process (Irvine 2006: 169).

In an interview in 1984, philosopher Michel Foucault spoke of freedom from desire as follows:

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<sup>143</sup> Emphasis in original.

<sup>144</sup> Emphasis in original.

[I]t is obvious that by liberating our desire that we will learn to conduct ourselves ethically [...] for what is ethics, if not the practice of freedom [...]. Freedom is the ontological condition of ethics. But ethics is the considered form that freedom takes when it is informed by reflection (1994: 284).

We are not just reflexive creatures: we possess a highly sophisticated second processing system; our reflective or “controlled” system allows us to map choices and deliberate before making a decision (Haidt and Joseph 2004: 57). This is ultimately where ethics comes into being and what its entire role and purpose is. Self-interview and critical self-reflection can play an important role in delaying or inhibiting our automatic responses, granting us an opportunity for, as Russell put it, “observing our actions” (in Irvine 2006: 118), and contribute to, as Hume suggested, an “appropriate choice making process” (in Irvine 2006: 169). I would argue that self-interview is such a process, one in which we can, in Foucault’s terms, “free” ourselves through “informed reflection” (1994: 284).

Saying ‘no’ to ethically contentious pedagogical practices and questioning the way we approach performance training, implies the possibility for ethical maturation and evolution; and this begins with exercising our personal power of choice and confronting our own inner division and prejudice by whatever means we have at our disposal.

Self interview offers a space to deeply question assumptions and vent true feelings and opinions “without live ammunition” (Levy 1997: 66). It offers a space to question and identify our deeply held prejudices, fears and doubts without incurring the wrath of others or infringing on their rights. It offers a space in which to prepare and rehearse our personal ethos. At least, this is how I experienced the process to be. Like journaling, self-interview allows for the recognition of our own voice regarding right and wrong amidst the clamour of voices to which we are daily exposed. It offers us a place to identify and stand our ground - a ground from which we can assert our unique point of view. And this is critical for self and others in terms of fostering moral agency in a manner that can serve the collective.

Although I offer a version of the *Personal Ethics Questionnaire* as an addendum to this study, I by no means feel it imperative or even necessarily optimal that other educators answer it in the form I present it. In fact, in keeping with virtue-centred ethics and autonomous moral agency I would suggest that the questions one asks should be self-devised and self-motivated, stemming rather from a personal desire to know and understand. In a sense I am proposing an elevation of the *method* of self-interview above the format of the questionnaire itself. I suggest that the more personal ownership there can be the better. I found that the questions I asked inevitably led to more questions, and as I pursued questions to their roots in search of their motivations I came closer to questions that held personal meaning and validity for me; this increased my curiosity and raised the stakes of my vested interest. I

became increasingly self-motivated. I wanted to know more and more, especially with regard to seeking a deeper understanding of why I was attracted to performance, education and ethics.

Discovering that my personal desire to perform was less a matter of enjoyment of being on stage, and more an issue of seeking my own voice and a deeply situated need for recognition (self-definition), reframed my understanding of why I am interested in teaching, and also ethics. Such knowledge arms me as an educator because it allows me to observe how this motivation might be something I could inflict on students or expect from the performance education context. In what ways might teaching performance become an extension of my own need for recognition and acceptance? In what ways might I be manipulating the educational context to become more oriented toward self-actualisation than performance education? If so, is this wrong? What are the ethical implications at stake?

I believe that the *Personal Ethics Questionnaire*, and self-interview in particular, as a means to identify and articulate personal perspectives or a personal “philosophy of reason, value, and action” (Weick and Browning 1986 in Browning and Boudès 2005: 35), holds the potential to be a means whereby individuated diversity or an intuitionist, situationist and virtue-based ethics can find a ground within drama, theatre and performance education in which to root and live. Describing and reflecting on the utility and relevance of such exploration within a process of ethical self enquiry makes a significant contribution to realising my first four research aims<sup>145</sup>.

Once again, the ethical tensions between license and limits become apparent in the self-interview exploration. On the one hand I am advocating a need to break the “conspiracy of silence prevalent in the field” (Seton 2009: 3) or the deeply embedded meme of ‘non-questioning’; and on the other I am suggesting that the habitus of performance and its education may be compromised through an over-emphasis on ‘open-mindedness’ that may result in a loss of moral/ethical perspective in relation to higher values (or a higher organising principle) and a corrosion of personal and group integrity. Exploring ethical tensions demands a willingness to embrace and work with ambiguity and paradox at all times and to remain alert and aware of contradictions such as these. Questioning also implies risk: in this instance a betrayal of the culture. This may contribute to factions forming, exacerbate frictions and in turn lead to intimidation by various parties. I don’t believe that such risk is avoidable but it should be managed and navigated with care and respect. The emphasis should remain always on increasing personal and collective consciousness and working empathically and sensitively, thus *ethically*.

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<sup>145</sup> To review, see Chapter 1, section 1.5.5.

## CHAPTER FIVE: Fishing expedition #4: A *Narrative of Personal Ethics*

This chapter details my exploration of autoethnographic narrative as an ethical self enquiry practice. This is followed by reflections on my experiences of this process integrated with illuminating and supportive theories and concepts extracted from a review of literature in Trawling Phase 2. I will offer insights into, and an appraisal of the use and relevance of, narrative self-research in a process of ethical self enquiry relative to general ethics and ethics in performance and its education.

Throughout this *Performed Narrative* thus far, and in Chapter One in particular, I have offered significant support for the use of narrative within a process of ethical self enquiry. However, as an orientational point of departure, Connelly and Clandinin astutely frame the relevance of narrative enquiry for educators:

Narrative is the study of how humans make meaning of experience by endlessly telling and retelling stories about themselves that both refigure the past and create purpose in the future. Thus, to study narrative [...] in trying to understand the personal, one needs to ask questions not only about the past, or the present, or the future, but about all three. For any one teacher, therefore, clues to the personal are obtained from one's history, from how one thinks and feels, and from how one acts. These clues may be obtained in a variety of ways, both personally and in research [...] (1988: 24-25).

As mentioned in the previous chapter my research in preparation for writing what I came to call *A Narrative of Personal Ethics* (Prigge 2014d) involved deliberately including questions in the *Personal Ethics Questionnaire* (Prigge 2014c) that would allow me to observe the origin and evolution of my interest in and pursuit of performance as a course of study and career, my journey into education, and my growing relationship to ethics:

- Why was I attracted to performance (where did it all begin)?
- What drew me towards performance as a choice of study and then career?
- Where did my interest in education begin (why did I become a teacher of drama, theatre and performance)?
- Why am I interested in ethics?
- Where did my interest in ethics begin (what motivated it)? (Prigge 2014c).

Having 'trawled the waters' and netted or gathered together diverse experiences as a student, professional and educator in drama, theatre and performance, I cut and pasted together a sequential 'patchwork' from all of the documentation I had accrued; in my case this included: a Life Narrative (which I titled "MyStory") that I wrote as a result of completing the *ACTivation: Playing Your Self* paratheatrical research process I developed (and which was included in the beginning of a book of the same title I wrote) (Prigge 2005: 14-34); excerpts from various journals I have kept over the course of two decades; poetry and prose I had written during the same period; content from the *Recapitulation*

*Journal* (Prigge 2014a), the *Ethics Evolution Journal* (Prigge 2014b) and the *Personal Ethics Questionnaire* (Prigge 2014c). I then ‘wove’ this content together into a coherent narrative detailing the origins and growing interrelationship between three significant strands of my life journey: performance, education and ethics (Prigge 2014d). This narrative granted me a bird’s eye view of the evolution of my personal ethos and how it had come to be. I began this process on 13 March 2014 and completed it on 29 March 2014.

## 5.1 Writing to ‘right’ my personal pedagogy

As I worked on this narrative I realised that my view was largely negative, which makes sense from the point of view that I was coming at this study from an angle or attitude of critique - observing more acutely what is ‘wrong’ than what is ‘right’. However, as touched on in the previous chapter, my deep passion for the potential drama, theatre and performance education holds as a transformational and liberating technology of self-realisation or self actualisation shone through very clearly. This potential is one I believe should be protected and nurtured, and it is possibly the deepest motivation I recognise behind exploring ethics to begin with. Unhealthy or damaging processes and practices could threaten this potential if they are not safeguarded against, or clearly articulated and understood. By extension, the power of theatre and performance as a platform for social change and the evolution of human consciousness was also very strongly emphasised in my writing, and once again this is something that I believe should be nurtured; once again, unethical choices and practices could sabotage this possibility.

Nevertheless, I recognised an overall negative bias in my tone and writing. I observed that in many respects this negativity owed its source to perceived ‘abuses’ and ‘ills’ I had suffered in the process of training and working in the industry; the detrimental effects of what I would call certain key features of the ‘counter-culture’ of the performing arts. In my narrative I wrote that I felt the performing arts culture cultivated a vulnerability toward poor moral character, lifestyle and health related choices (Prigge 2014d). I discussed and described unsound educative practices I myself had engaged and perpetuated in my early years as an educator (Prigge 2014d). I realised that my journey into ethics was reactive to a significant degree, versus being pro-active. It was a defensive versus progressive strategy. The negative bias was directly proportional to the nature of the impulses I was reacting to. Negative impulses along the way brought about an awakening and a growing conscience of the need for ethics. There is nothing inherently wrong in this; very often the need for change only arises through a recognition that things *aren’t* working, and pain or dis-ease or suffering are markers of such ‘failure’ and effectively activate consciousness that things could/should be different. Yet, I felt upon completing and re-reading my narrative that my attitude now needed to shift. The ‘negative reaction’ phase had served me well but I was increasingly ready for change.



A deeply situated “diffuse felt sense” (Welwood 2000: 93) that I had carried for some time was now stirred to life, and this moment called more urgently for movement from unconsciousness to consciousness. This sense began quite early in my research process, grew stronger as I progressed and owed its origin to the fact that for several months I had been working with extremely deep and ‘heavy’ issues. I had been wading through the ‘muck’ of issues pertaining to ‘damage’, ‘abuse’, and ‘suffering’. I was by this time tired of being mired day in and day out in the ‘dark side’. Clinical psychologist John Welwood offers insight into how a focus on one’s more negative personal narrative might blight one’s perspective:

The more you mull over the stories, the sadder you become, and the sadder you feel, the darker the stories become - a vicious cycle that starts generating more intense emotion, such as depression and despair, which in turn lead to more depressing thoughts. As depression starts to congeal out of the simple sadness you turned away from, you may start to see the entire world, your whole life history and future prospects in this dreary light (Welwood 2000: 185).

I had been focussed on the ‘serious’ and had made little space for the ‘play’. I now wanted elevation and to bring fresh energy and perspectives into my process. I needed this for the sake of my well-being, but also recognised that for other educators a positive attitude to ethics as a force of liberation, or a movement towards something aspirational, versus a negative view founded on detraction, critique and limitation would necessarily be useful. This recognition led me to rewrite my narrative from a different perspective as a means and affirmation to begin to nurture such potential.

#### 5.1.1 Improvisation #4: Serious PLAY: sharing a different narrative *or* sharing the same narrative, but with a different narrator

For this creative exercise I drew on a technique I developed in *ACTivation Playing Your Self* (Prigge 2005: 306) which calls for re-writing your narrative ‘as if’ you did everything *on purpose*. This improvisation shares similarities with the final step of the *recapitulation* process described in Chapter Two where you envision alternative (positive) outcomes for past experiences. The practice neutralises the negative ‘reactivity’, or at least balances it with a more positive counterpart, and allows for taking responsibility and accountability for choices and learning. This revised narrative changes the orientation from being a victim of circumstance to a conscious agent; it activates visions of potentials moving forward and fosters a ‘healing of the past’ through an altered or broadened sense of acceptance versus rejection.

Even when you might not have had control over what happened to you, by writing from a position in which you consider that: “I could not possibly have the perspective I *now have* had my life been any different”, a sense of autonomy and sovereignty arise. Instead of writing “this happened to me and it was bad...” the framing shifts to “I *chose* to experience this in order to learn...” or “This experience

has granted me the opportunity to awaken to the possibility that...”<sup>146</sup>. The difference may seem subtle, but the effect is significant. The entire narrative takes on a progressive and pro-active tone.

The process calls for ownership of your past and your life moving forward. It emphasises learning over ‘failure’ and growth over ‘suffering’. Experience-centred narrative researchers often seek out “improvement” in stories or a “discourse of ‘growth’”, “narrative change” that assists understanding and the process of coming to terms with negatively affective experiences (Squire in Andrews et al. 2013: 52). According to philosopher Paul Ricoeur, psychoanalysts may listen for “the story not yet told” in order to offer, through analysis, an improved story which is “more bearable and intelligible” (1991: 31). This resonates strongly with the intended outcome of this improvisation: the deliberate formulation of a revised and positively charged narrative. However, for this reason experience-centred narrative research may be controversially associated with “social, psychological and quasi-clinical value judgements about stories” (Squire in Andrews et al. 2013: 52). As a self-researcher I found there to be a certain therapeutic dimension to engaging in this particular improvisation because it inherently implies a significant degree of psychological self-analysis based precisely on such value judgements. However, rather than promoting “socially or culturally conventional criteria” (Squire in Andrews et al. 2013: 52) which may be problematic, my intention was to deliberately seek out *personal* value judgments that could assist with conscientising my personal ethos in such a manner that I might evolve historical ethical orientations regarding past experiences into more appropriate, and thus useful, present and future-directed perspectives.

Revising your personal narrative in this manner challenges you to consciously and actively seek out transformative potentials. Self-interview questions are useful as a means to generate insights:

- *How can I transform my experiences of abuse, or my experiences of abusing others, into wisdom for the benefit of self and others?*
- *How might I transform suffering or unethical conduct into a gift of transformation rather than seeing it as a curse that inhibits my potential and negatively affects those around me?*
- *What if I did - on some deeper, unconscious level - choose this experience? What latent or unconscious personal potentials have been activated as a result of this experience?*
- *If I did unconsciously choose this experience, was there purpose behind it? What might such purpose be?*
- *What does this experience mean to me?*
- *Can I influence/change this meaning? If so, how would I prefer to interpret this experience?*

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<sup>146</sup> I would suggest each individual should choose his or her own phrasing here, in accordance with what is appropriate for them, and in keeping moreover with their personal ethos and belief system. Ultimately a *shift of perspective* should be emphasised over ‘truth’, so that the injection of different points of view or an engagement with creative alternatives may constructively impact present and future attitudes.

The objective of the improvisation is not to undermine or belittle trauma or abuse, nor does it assume that one does deliberately choose to experience suffering; rather the focus resides with the adoption of a different stance/attitude in relation to past experiences. As discussed at length in Chapter Two, the past can be re-interpreted; and how it is interpreted is ultimately the key to how we integrate it into our understanding and experience (interpretation) of self as we progress through life.

Here is a simple, yet significant, example of this re-interpretation process: The original version of the life narrative I composed for this study (Prigge 2014d) repeatedly revealed that during the course of my training and early experiences as a professional performer I ignored, suppressed, repressed or denied certain moral emotions that arose when I was faced with certain tasks and practices<sup>147</sup>. My desire for success, to win favour or to be considered worthy of being cast in certain ‘prestigious’ roles - or in Seton’s words again, to honour “ability, recognition and reward” (2007: 2) - made me vulnerable to abuse and stunted my personal conscience<sup>148</sup>. The result was a gradual atrophy of my previously held guiding belief system and an increasing corrosion of my ability to make sound ethical choices. I originally interpreted this one dimensionally, as ‘bad’, and I blamed the system and others (educators, directors, choreographers) more than I blamed myself. In my original narrative I felt justified in my judgment because I was, after all, young and impressionable (thus vulnerable), and because the organisational habitus of performance and its education seemed to overtly promote the understanding that such moral repression was necessary for success as a performer. Such interpretation is the reaction of an unconscious victim versus that of a conscious moral agent. Before I re-interpreted these experiences I did not yet assume personal accountability for them in any way. So while these experiences may have been raised *to* consciousness in my original narrative, I would not say that my consciousness regarding them had itself been raised. Only when I began to revise my narrative and considered why I might at the time have chosen to abandon my ethical guidance system, and when I had factored in the resulting sense of confusion, disillusionment and suffering I experienced later in my life would I say that such a process of raising consciousness truly began.

So, what if I *chose* to abandon my ethical or moral radar *on purpose*?

In my revised life narrative I ‘chose’ to experience the dissolution of my ethical guidance system and to suffer a compromising of my character in order to:

- Move past moral servility to a belief system that was inherited at face value during the course of my upbringing and social conditioning versus tested in actuality or real-life-experience.
- Learn to discern between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ on my own terms through hard won experience.

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<sup>147</sup> See suggested ethical consideration 33 in Chapter 7.

<sup>148</sup> See suggested ethical consideration 11 in Chapter 7.

- Understand the power of moral emotions and to learn to heed them in their vital capacity as a warning system.
- Develop the necessary courage to say ‘no’ even if this means facing rejection by others or facing the insecurity (financial and in terms of career status) that potentially comes from being overlooked.
- Develop the courage to appear ethically/morally ‘conservative’ in a libertarian habitus that by its very nature champions deviance and non-conformity to social (and thus often ethical) norms.
- Learn to stand up for what I believe is right and wrong and develop moral character or ‘backbone’.
- Re-instate virtues and virtuous behaviour as aspirational in my life.
- Experience the necessary ethical dis-ease that stimulated my ethical/moral maturation.
- Experience a growing sense of life purpose that weaves the three stands of performance, education and ethics together.

My original life narrative also included instances where I had behaved in ways that I would now describe as ‘unethical’ toward others (students, cast-members, colleagues) by expecting them to ‘blunt’ or temper their moral reactions to exercises, practices and ideologies in the educational context or in rehearsals for productions; these were moments where I felt their moral emotions were ‘getting in the way’ or impeding the creative process<sup>149</sup>. I had been trained in this way and perpetuating this approach was “‘natural’ or ‘normal’” (Seton 2007: 2). Or as Seton puts it: “if it was good enough for me, it’s good enough for them” (2007: 2).

While I suffered the converse to the previous example here, in other words guilt at being the perpetrator versus feeling like a justified victim, the trap of being ‘hooked’ or trapped by the past remained acute. Entertaining the idea that I ‘chose’ to behave in this way allowed me to recognise that had I not done so, I would not have experienced the situation from the perspective of the educator also, and thus the full range of the dynamics at work in the student/educator continuum would have been withheld from me. Ultimately my experience and perspective would have been impoverished. Knowing, and having lived, both sides of the story as both victim and perpetrator allows me to be empathetic to both points of view. I believe this enhances my capacity as an educator to observe mutually beneficial solutions that I might not otherwise have been able to access. I can now see the possibility that forgiving myself for questionable past behaviours (and alleviating the concomitant self-loathing that accompanies the confrontation of one’s shortcomings) may be achievable through atonement; through a conscious process of embracing my learning directly by engaging in more ethical or virtuous future actions. Facing my own inadequacies also supports my attempts to be more

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<sup>149</sup> See suggested ethical considerations 1, 2, 5, 9 and 33 in Chapter 7.

empathetic to the position of educators, choreographers or directors who deliberately or unknowingly participated in pressuring me to jeopardise my moral/ethical guidance system as a student and professional.

Such reframing granted me the opportunity to recognise that without stepping outside of the lines of my personal ethical limits and exploring new licenses during my training and career, I would not have evolved a number of important facets of my current life, and would likely not be writing this narrative right now. This does not mean condoning unethical behaviours; instead it offers an opportunity to begin managing the guilt that might accompany confronting them. This improvisation allowed me to begin a process of constructively integrating historical ‘burdens’ into a positively evolving (enlightened) versus negatively degenerating (damaged/compromised) sense of self.

Very often negative or ‘victim’ thinking is difficult to integrate and transcend. This approach does not seek to change what happened but reorients your relation to it. To be a victim may not be a choice, but remaining a victim may well be. Even if you don’t actually believe the difference, writing and re-reading the narrative in this format creates the potential for a shift in perspective. The same story becomes a different story, a story that is future oriented versus past oriented, a story of what could be versus what has been. The person who writes this narrative is and is not the same person who wrote the first narrative; the story is the same but the voice is different, and the different voice transforms the story in terms of its impact and power. Instead of being a burden, the story becomes a talisman of a brighter future.

Instead of framing ‘the call to ethics’ in light of what it might be *taking away* or *what needs to be limited*, this exercise began for me a movement toward more consciously considering what it might in fact be *offering*; for myself, others, the discipline and industry.

#### 5.1.2 Improvisation #5: ethical character studies

Completing my *Narrative of Personal Ethics* inspired another creative exercise which I felt might prepare me psychologically were I to enter into a ‘living’ face-to-face context with my teachers of the past, current and ex-colleagues and peers; in other words, if I *really* were to meet around a table with fellow educators to discuss and/or create a code or framework of ethics, and might have to defend/validate/negotiate my personal ethos. I felt the need to enhance my understanding of, and empathy for, alternative points of view regarding where to ‘draw the line’ or ‘set the tensions’ of licenses and limits associated with various concerns. I had to confront the fact that just because I see something as an ethical concern, does not mean someone else necessarily will. Everyone has a different story of ethics to tell. And I am also not necessarily right. So, recognising my ethical bias and clearly articulated criticism of the culture of performance and its education demanded that I widen my

compass to include perspectives of others in lieu of actually being able to dialogue with them. It is one thing to know what you feel and believe deep down and another to have to negotiate or even possibly defend your position. While the ethical self enquiry process I describe is intended to be done in seclusion and remain uninfluenced by the opinions of others, I felt it was necessary to be prepared for alternative views as a means to better understand and articulate my own.

In answer to this urge, I invented an improvisation in the form of generating a series of ‘character studies’ or ‘character sketches’ which I felt would assist me in this regard<sup>150</sup>. Taking elements of personalities in the form of real people I know, or have known and worked with as a student or in performance education and industry, I created ‘composite’ identities or *types*, which I felt had differing and clearly defined (ethical) orientations toward art and performance. I wanted to ‘see through another’s eyes’ to account for what I might at this point have been missing, or at least challenge myself to see things differently. Although this process was imaginative, speculative and hypothetical, it was nevertheless useful and illuminating. It encouraged me in many instances to emphasise and foreground some of the ‘good’ things about performance and its education; it reminded me again of the necessary counterbalance of ‘play’. It allowed me to recall that I have taught, known, been taught by, and worked with so many inspiring people; people who have activated passions in me through their fire and drive, people who have recognised and nurtured talents in me that I myself was not necessarily cognisant of at the time, ‘good’ people. Significant others have touched and shaped me.

This recognition can be felt in many of the *Parables*, because these ‘character sketches’ influenced and informed the characters I created in them. In the *Parables Trevor, Stacey, Charlie, Conrad, Shelley, Vernon, Gerald, Preston and Cindy*<sup>151</sup>, the actions and choices of the various fictional educators may undoubtedly be interpreted as ethically flawed in various ways, even though their intentions might actually be good. *How* educators strive to achieve certain outcomes may be problematic (questionable) even while their desire to produce competent performers, based on their own training, may be ‘good’ (within the existing paradigm). This may seem ambiguous and contradictory, but managing this contradiction is critical when coming to a deeper understanding of the complexity of ethics and to ensure one does not fall prey to unjust judgment. Each in their own way, the various educators in these *Parables* actually have the students best interests at heart; they sincerely want their students to succeed. Educators may sincerely strive to answer the student’s desire for competence and success even if the *need* (appropriateness) for meeting such desires has not necessarily adequately been questioned. As mentioned previously, educators may be trapped in historical momentums, “a continuum of formation and habituation” (Seton 2010: 9), and a social

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<sup>150</sup> Although these ‘character sketches’ were composites and thus not entirely indicative of real people, I do not include examples because they may be too closely related to existing persons. Consider *Parable 2* and 16 in Chapter 7 as potential illustrations.

<sup>151</sup> See Chapter 7.

imaginary or organisational habitus in which certain practices and expectations are deemed appropriate and acceptable - even 'good' if they have historically proven their value and worth for inculcating competence. While this does not make the practices unquestionably 'right', following or promoting them does not inherently make educators who promote them 'bad' or 'wrong'. The issue has to do with levels of consciousness. The 'character sketches' assisted me to make sense of the fact that unconsciousness of the deleterious effects of certain practices does not mean educators are necessarily 'unethical' (until such time perhaps, as such negative potentials are revealed or raised to consciousness).

Creating the character sketches allowed me to recognise that many of the actions and intentions of my own past educators were sincerely geared toward improving my capabilities as an artist and building my talents, and this filtered through to the characters in the final *Parables*. My capacity to observe that the manner in which they liberated my potential was not necessarily ethically sound, however, is based on my *current* understanding and level of consciousness. Making this important distinction between unconsciousness and consciousness and observing my own maturation or growth curve was an important step in my process of accepting and forgiving my own teachers and acknowledging their worth and value. It also challenged me to discern more clearly between the *how* and *what* of education. Practices (what) may work and thus be 'good', even though their delivery or the way in which they are approached (how) may need revision. Educators may be 'good' people even while aspects of their own training and thus their delivery of practices may be 'bad'. Conversely, certain practices that are undeniably 'good' (successful) may be 'bad' (damaging) and need to be excluded because there may simply be no way of approaching them that does not cause significant harm. The 'character sketches' and the process of generating the characters for the *Parables* proved hugely instrumental in my process of learning to discern more sensitively and appropriately, versus judging blindly.

This exercise reminded me that it is necessary to focus on the issues and not only on the people. Certainly in some instances I would describe contentious ethical concerns that were revealed by my excavation of past experience as being the result of the 'poor' character or the 'ethical deviance' of myself and/or certain others. But such instances are the exception. This exercise allowed me to let everyone be human again; and the need I felt to complete this task helped me to more deeply realise an important ethical truth: the self is defined by the other. Ethics is certainly personal, but it is ultimately relational. Without the impulses and influences of others, good and bad, positive and negative, my own process of ethical maturation would not be possible. Without composing an autoethnographic account of the evolution of my journey into performance, education and ethics, I may not have been able to conscientise this recognition in as cogent a manner as I did.



## 5.2 Reflections on a Narrative of Personal Ethics

This section details my process of returning to my experiences of compiling and composing my personal narrative and reflecting on it. This reflection ran concurrent to a review of literature that would assist me to better understand my experiences, to appraise the utility of narrative exposition as part of a process of ethical self enquiry, and observe its relevance to general ethics and ethics in performance and its education.

### 5.2.1 Earning Autonomy: ethical maturation through narrative embodiment

What a predicament. We've reduced the input of our feelings because they hurt too much. Yet we can't function well without them, so now we're in chronic discomfort. Such is the cost of unconsciousness, of keeping a roof over our unwanted data (Ferguson 2005: 103).

All of the processes engaged in this study are means to accessing and confronting “unwanted data”. Constructing a narrative account of when we might have dissociated, suppressed or repressed feelings or how and why we have purposefully or incidentally relegated certain feelings to unconsciousness is an uncomfortable but enormously empowering endeavour. Observing the unfolding of our ethical development is a two-way exchange between our sense of self and how we thus react or respond to impulses we receive from our environment. This oscillation or exchange of impulses between license and limits grants us a clear indication of what we currently value and why, and it is prophetic of what our ethical choices might be as we navigate into the future.

This is a process of ethical education and maturation, which my literary explorations in Trawling Phase 2 revealed may begin extremely early in life with the nature of our attachment, or to put it in colloquial terms, ‘bonding’ with our mother or primary caregiver. Attachment Theory<sup>152</sup> explains how a parent’s “attunement” or openness to the signals that pass between them and their child, and the “coherence” of a parent’s life narrative (how they have ‘healed’ or made sense of, and embody their own sense of meaning and security in the world), might be predictive of a child’s development (Siegel 2006 in Callahan 2007: 12). In the early stages of development this process takes place through physical touch, eye contact and imitative mirroring and becomes increasingly complex as the child becomes more independent.

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<sup>152</sup> “Attachment theory is the joint work of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). Drawing on concepts from ethology, cybernetics, information processing, developmental psychology, and psychoanalysts, John Bowlby formulated the basic tenets of the theory. He thereby revolutionized our thinking about a child’s tie to the mother and its disruption through separation, deprivation, and bereavement. Mary Ainsworth’s innovative methodology not only made it possible to test some of Bowlby’s ideas empirically but also helped expand the theory itself and is responsible for some of the new directions it is now taking. Ainsworth contributed the concept of the attachment figure as a secure base from which an infant can explore the world. In addition, she formulated the concept of maternal sensitivity to infant signals and its role in the development of infant-mother attachment patterns” (Bretherton 1992: 759).

A secure attachment might be forged between adult and child through the soothing of negative reactions to the environment and an enhancement of positive ones. This process grants the developing child the ability to explore the environment confidently when it feels safe and to seek comfort and nurturance when threatened. If disruptions occur in the state of attunement between adult and child, then the ability of a parent to “repair” the disruption through re-attunement becomes predicative of a child’s later emotional and psychological resilience (Jacolev 2009: 25). Effectively the child learns how to model or ‘wire’ neurobiological pathways between states of upset and equilibrium through mimicry and guidance by a secure adult. In a “disorganised” attachment, the child does not learn effective strategies for coping, self-soothing or modulating negative states; the child struggles to regain equilibrium after an upsetting incident (Jacolev 2009: 28).

According to attachment theorist Allan Schore “[t]he interface of nature and nurture is now thought to occur in the psychobiological interaction between mother and infant”, and if this process is disrupted or disturbed sufficiently it can lead to a vulnerability toward psychopathology (1997: 616). Poor attachment or relational trauma experienced early in childhood development cause a stunted process of maturation of the right brain, and the person in question will forever be faced with trying to overcome an “insurmountable object” (Janet 1996 in Schore 2002: 438); this effectively means that natural adaptive mental processes which are responsible for maintaining a coherent sense of self break down. The person in question may tend towards constantly seeking affirmation and recognition to assert, define and maintain self integrity (Miller 1997, Schore 2002).

There is evidence linking the personality or psychological profile of creative types who may be attracted to performance, and narcissistic tendencies<sup>153</sup> resulting from trauma experienced through poor attachment in early childhood. These tendencies ironically stem from poor self-image or low self-esteem; a lack of, fractured or fragmented ‘sense of self’ (Fenichel 1960, Bergler 1960, Kaplan 1966 and 1969, Miller 1997, Pinsky and Young 2010, Shollenberger 2014). There is also evidence linking substance abuse<sup>154</sup>, dysfunctional relationships and poor lifestyle choices - which Brandfonbrener (1992), Seton (2009), Pinsky and Young (2010) and Szlawieniec-Haw (2012) identify as a significant problem amongst performers - with poor attachment and relational trauma in early development (Porter 2014). Marks-Tarlow (2010: 31) suggests that if children do not achieve successful social orientation through organised attachment, “they mobilize inner resources in defense of a lost, disoriented, or fragile self”.

Harrop (1992: 30) speculates that “there is probably a necessary truth in the social perception of the actor as a child, an immature person with the irresponsibility of an ill-formed ego, or an ill-formed

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<sup>153</sup> ‘Narcissism’ was one of the memes associated with the habitus of performance and its education my self-interview process yielded (Prigge 2014c: 26). See suggested ethical consideration 69 in Chapter 7.

<sup>154</sup> See suggested ethical consideration 25 in Chapter 7.

sense of social self”<sup>155</sup>. Novick (1998: 20) suggests that “[a]ctors are perpetually stereotyped as exhibitionists and narcissists, and no one who has dealt extensively with them is likely to deny that this stereotype, like so many stereotypes, has in it more than a grain of truth”. He cites Dr. Philip Weissman, author of *Creativity in the Theatre: A Psychoanalytic Study* (1965): “Acting will attract those who have excessive inner needs for, and urgent insatiable gratifications from, exhibiting themselves” (in Novick 1998: 20), and goes on to observe that “to exhibit oneself is to assert oneself, to demand the attention of the world. ‘Now let’s talk about you,’ says the actor in the old joke. ‘What did you think of my performance?’” (1998: 20).

Poor attachment, dissociation and relational trauma also create conditions which may result in a disruption of the transference of strong moral foundations because it is in these early stages of development, through a process of visceral attunement to our primary caregiver, that we learn many of the values and virtues that may be deemed ethical or moral; such as empathy, justice, respect and love (Matousek 2011: 36). According to Matousek, psychologist Dan Siegel (one of the leading exponents of early childhood development) suggests that the “moral organ” is primed through interactions between caregiver and infant: “We learn to care, quite literally, by observing the caring behaviour of our parents toward us” (in Matousek 2011: 34). Mirror neurons bolster the case for attachment theory; they explain how the process of empathic mirroring and attunement between primary caregiver and infant actually works on a hard-science neurological level. Schore suggests that eventually the “prefrontal cortex of the mother becomes the prefrontal cortex of the infant” (in McTaggart 2011: 71).

What is of great significance with regard to the relation of ethics and morals to attachment theory is the central role of narrative. The key to developing a secure attachment with a child and enhancing his or her potential to be psychologically and emotionally resilient in later life lies not so much in being a “model parent” but in “the coherence or lack of coherence of the narrative response” (Jacolev 2009: 29). What this means is that a parent who has healed their own childhood wounds of insecure attachment attributable to their own parents’ treatment of them, achieves an “earned autonomy” (Siegel in Jacolev 2009: 25). This purportedly makes such a parent capable of preventing the trans-generational transmission of attachment patterns. Educator Kaya Jacolev (2009) points to the importance for educators to claim and re-frame their own history and life narrative because often their role very closely parallels parenting. Educators are surrogate parents and role models during contact time with students who may mirror not only their behaviour, beliefs and values, but also their neural patterns. Jacolev refers to the work of Siegel and Louis Cozolino who have both posited that the creation of a personal narrative may create new synaptic connections in the brain: “Narratives serve neural network integration and the health of the persons who tell them and hear them” (Cozolino in Jacolev 2009: 32). In the words of sociologist Christian Smith we are “animals who make stories but

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<sup>155</sup> See *Parables* 14 and 15, and suggested ethical consideration 70 in Chapter 7.

also animals who are *made by our stories*”<sup>156</sup> (in Haidt and Joseph 2006: 24). Thus it becomes apparent that the extent to which we have made sense of our narratives as educators, the extent to which we have identified and addressed the ethical deficits in our development owing to the specific nature of attachment we had with our parents or primary caregivers, may be predictive of the moral/ethical impact we have on our students. It also means confronting and ‘healing’ the impact that mirroring our own educators might have had on our narrative and thus moral/ethical development.

In *The Drama of the Gifted Child: The Search for the True Self*, psychologist Alice Miller suggests that psychiatrists, clinical psychologists and therapists who inadvertently make use of words with a pejorative meaning as they “zealously make their diagnosis”, might actually be “repeating” their own sense of inadequacy and fears of failing to live up to the expectations and standards of a mother (or other authority) figure (1997: 94)<sup>157</sup>. In the same way it is my speculation that educators may often ‘act out’ traumas of disempowerment experienced in their own education process (and/or industry experience) by inflicting these on their students. Miller (2005: 19) explains that the therapist’s “sensibility, empathy, responsiveness, and powerful antennae” (capacities I have observed drama students and educators evince in equally strong measure), “indicate that as a child he probably used to fulfil other people’s needs and to repress his own”.

The process of reflective self enquiry I undertook for this study lead me to recognise that when I became a teacher I “repeated” my own experiences by re-enacting them on those who were in a position weaker than I now was as an educator. I can now recognise that during my first few years as an educator I mirrored the way in which I was acculturated. I exhibited a tendency to confront directly any form of what I considered to be conservatism, resistance to experience or a fear of vulnerability<sup>158</sup>. In my understanding at such time any impediment that might get in the way of a performer’s ability to be a clear and open channel or medium of expression was to be systematically addressed and stripped away. While on the surface this was focused on practicalities such as poor postural habits, speech and vocal impediments, it also included personal ‘hang-ups’ or phobias, beliefs and values, or an unwillingness to ‘go there’ of any kind. Again, mirroring my own exposures, the means to achieving this was through actively seeking out students’ ‘blockages’ and naming, describing and remedying them through critique, feedback and targeted exercises<sup>159</sup>. Furthermore, the feedback and critique offered was often delivered in such a way that it did not speak to the behaviour, but to the *person*, and

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<sup>156</sup> Emphasis in original.

<sup>157</sup> Consider *Parable* 11, and suggested ethical considerations 37 and 56 in Chapter 7.

<sup>158</sup> See suggested ethical considerations 1, 2, 5 and 9 in Chapter 7.

<sup>159</sup> Seeking out such ‘blockages’ was central to the work of Grotowski and an emphasis in my Masters thesis (2010) because of the importance placed on it in contemporary performance training. “According to Kumiega (1987: 122) *via negativa* was ‘a guiding principle of all the physical training’ of Grotowski. Harrop (1992: 65) describes *via negativa* as: ‘the stripping of the actor of all unnecessary personal quirks and the neutralising of his or her body as an instrument’. Grotowski’s premise was inspired by Copeau’s ‘neutral mask’ (Harrop 1992: 65)” (Prigge 2010: 23).

there was little consideration granted the personal psychological and emotional impacts or implications<sup>160</sup>.

In my view at such time, performance training was not a ‘therapy session’ and my attitude was ‘get tough or get out’. This resonates with Seton’s experience: “Any resistance or awkwardness we had towards the teaching and practice required us to ‘get over it’ if we wanted to get into the industry” (2004: 233). During the course of this study I became almost obsessed with trying to determine how, and perhaps more importantly *why* I (and I suggest other educators) had become so inured, or suffered such a loss of empathy.

In Chapter Ten I will touch on this again, but suffice it for now to say that while our morality is connected to how we were raised and educated, it is not finally determined by it. By re-telling our stories we make sense of them for ourselves, and in so doing become more coherent. Attachment theory suggests that this coherence ‘rubs off’ in the sense that we may teach by direct transmission, body-to-body or brain-to-brain, by embodied example; those with whom we interact attune themselves to our now increased coherence versus being influenced by what was previously disorganisation, ambivalence and confusion.

While the focus of attachment theorists is on the potential that claiming one’s story has with regard to preventing the repeating of one’s own experiences on children, my research experience for this study leads me to a strong conviction that it is imperative for educators to claim their history and to make sense of their learning in order to improve their teaching and prevent passing habituated and embodied experiences (repeating trauma) on to their students.

### 5.2.2 Writing your life to reveal your purpose

Recounting our life story also serves another purpose: that of assisting us to frame and observe the unfolding, or revealing, of our (life) purpose itself. Even though I had intuitions that guided me to engage in this study, and although I have returned to the telling and re-telling of my life narrative several times during the course of the last decade as a means to, in Siegel’s terminology, “earn” my own “autonomy” (in Jacolev 2009: 25), it was only for the purposes of this study that I finally wove the threads of performance, education and ethics together for the first time in a coherent manner. The result was what I would describe as nothing less than a deep conscientisation and illumination of conscious, subconscious and unconscious themes that have been at work in my life history since its inception. These themes signify for me a deeper understanding of myself and thus my purpose as a person *and* educator (the two being indivisible).

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<sup>160</sup> See *Parable* 3, and suggested ethical considerations 2, 21, 35, 37 and 56 in Chapter 7.

Weber explains how “[t]he beginning of purpose is [...] often felt as a vague non-specific arousal or unfilled need, followed by a search or quest for an object of purpose, usually for a goal or activity with undefined characteristics” (2000: 234). He goes on to say that the storytelling mind is the psychological root of purpose (2000: 235); the “basic storytelling schema says that someone we care about wants something and has to overcome obstacles to get it”. This, he suggests “is a shorthand description of what human purpose is all about” (2000: 235), and it allows us to step back and review our actions “as those of a character in a story”, thereby granting us the ability to retrospectively understand our purpose: “Why did we do what we did?” Our life story allows us to see the frameworks operating on and beneath the surface of our life, and thus gifts a sense of a/the bigger picture.

Once we find a central purpose upon which to base our lives, that motley pattern coheres in the form of a story: with beginnings we find in the horizon of the past, a current situation, and a desired end on the horizon of the future, the vision of which guides us as we work to reshape our present circumstances and find a meaningful past (Novak 2010: 4).

My overall sense of purpose became illuminated as the strands of performance, ethics and education intersected. The convergence of these strands grants me perspective on my unique identity. I have had unique experiences that have resulted in the creation of this *Performed Narrative*. Through the framing and communication of this narrative my traumatic past experiences, challenges and struggles can become fuel for sounder ethics in performance and its education. My story may have a relevance that extends beyond my own integration and healing and could be beneficial for others; now and into the future.

The way in which I choose to tell my story (and prepare or research it) also grants insight into my purpose. Ethical self enquiry is central to who and what I believe myself to be and is something of value I feel a desire to share with others. This is revealed in the practices and methods I have chosen to use in this study and in the demonstration or communication of my findings. At the centre of my personal purpose lie creative self-discovery, recovery and expression; in short, self-actualisation. This extends to my interpretation of the purpose of drama, theatre and the performing arts, and by implication the education thereof. I am not expecting other educators to agree with the view that performance education should be founded on self-actualisation, but having clearly identified and articulated this personal bias through the various practices I have engaged, including most emphatically the authoring of my *Narrative of Personal Ethics*, prepares me to contextualise my orientation in dialogue with other educators and students. This is the ground upon which I stand. It is from this ground (ethos, bias, perspective and viewpoint) that I personally identify the ethical concerns and territories my guiding research question seeks answer to.



### 5.2.3 Life narrative and professional development

Working on my *Narrative of Personal Ethics* also led me to resonate strongly with Martin's view that narrative or story is a powerful means to professional development due to the fact that there is "a social and ethical dimension to the practice of a vocation, profession or leadership role" (2011: 15). The South African *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy* highlights "the importance of teachers as role models" (South African Dept. of Education 2003: 4).

One of the most powerful ways of children and young adults acquiring values is to see individuals they admire and respect exemplify those values in their own being and conduct. Parents and educators or politicians or priests who say one thing and do another send mixed messages to those in their charge who then learn not to trust them. The question of leadership generally, and in the educational sphere particularly, is therefore of vital importance (Nelson Mandela (2001) in South African Dept. of Education, 2003: 19).

Making sense of our personal history may assist with observing, identifying and professing, through action and being, core values that guide autonomous judgement rooted in trustworthiness (Martin 2011: 15). The Minessence group (2010) identify a key characteristic of leaders, experts and accomplished professionals as being an emphasis on personal values that "are not unconscious motivators," but that are "conscious motivators" (Minessence 2010). Carter (1998), Cloud and Kritsonis (2008) and Cranston and Kusanovich (2013) consider strong ethical leadership as critical in the general context of education: "With students daily observing a decline in moral behavior from individuals entrusted with leadership positions, measures to improve ethical conduct are needed more than ever in education" (Cloud and Kritsonis 2008: 2). Claiming our life narrative and making sense of our personal journey may support our attempts as educators to aspire to what Martin identifies as five basic principles that underpin the ethical conduct of experts, professionals and leaders: "Rationality", "autonomy", "responsibility", "self-awareness" and "a commitment to learning" (2011: 15-16).

## 5.3 Gathering in the net: narrative research and exposition as an ethical self enquiry practice

Through the process of writing and re-writing my life I came to understand just to what extent my own inner voice had been silenced due to my history, and finding ways in which to share my truth in this study without imposing on the rights of others was a challenge that assisted me to recognise my deep need to find my own voice<sup>161</sup>. This pattern did not end in childhood for me but in part motivated and continued into my career and impacted my role as a teacher. The search for my 'true face' or 'authentic voice' (as a person and educator) and my desire to free or liberate it from the conditions and

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<sup>161</sup> See Chapter 9, section 9.2 for further insight into this issue.



habituations of my acculturation and history in many respects facilitated this process; particularly through this *Performed Narrative*. I found the process of *recapitulation* in conjunction with claiming my *Narrative of Personal Ethics* to be deeply therapeutic and also prophetic of becoming a more empathic and thus ethical teacher; a teacher who is more conscious of the need to be cognisant of the potential of repeating trauma by using students as “scapegoats” (Miller 2005: 116).

Iyengar (2011: 20) proposes that when our narrative is about choice or the “idea that we have control”, then “we can tell it to ourselves - quite literally - ‘in order to live’”. I wrote and re-wrote my narrative many times after the first draft because it seemed mired in the negative. Although the seriousness or weight (gravity) of the material remained prevalent in subsequent drafts, I found that new possibilities for understanding emerged as my perspectives changed. I found that this process at once revealed new ethical themes and considerations pertaining to performance and its education, and also allowed me to see myself reflected in new ways. It was as if each successive rendition was written by someone else, a newer or improved me; an emergent self that was being altered, transformed and changed by the process of engaging in this study. This resonates with Richards’ notion of an emergent “third self” shared in Chapter One; a self that is neither “present nor past, but a blurring of the two and, at the same time, someone else” (Richards 2012: 92).

Ultimately we can choose how to tell our story: as a victim or an agent. If we are, as Smith (in Haidt and Joseph 2006: 24) suggests, “*made by* our stories”, earning our autonomy by re-telling our narrative might assist us to revise and remodel our ethical character. Telling it - on paper, in spoken words, through embodied action - becomes an act of virtue, a ‘dramatic rehearsal’<sup>162</sup> that may lead to new habits and ethical/moral virtuosity. It may also reveal to others that they are not alone. Telling our stories may give us the shared courage to confront what needs to change through exposure and mutual revelation. This resonates with and reinforces Grotowski’s idea that “it is through exposure that the individual and the collective converge” (in Kumiega 1987: 132). Owning our past struggles and abuses clears the impediments in our system and could allow us to become more open mediums or channels of expression in the studio and classroom. Our increased sobriety, consciousness and clarity may set up a healthier and more coherent resonance to which students might attune themselves in an act of embodied education, which becomes elevated to a level I would personally describe as *positively charged energetic transference*<sup>163</sup>.

Owing to the central role narrative plays in this *Performed Narrative* and its relevance to a process and practice of ethical self enquiry, the description and reflection on my own process offered in this

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<sup>162</sup> To review this concept, see Chapter 2, section 2.2.3.

<sup>163</sup> This in contrast to the kind of ‘energetic damage’ or ‘anti-energetic exchanges’ Toltec *Recapitulation* seeks to heal; see Chapter Two, section 2.1 to review.

chapter constitutes a form of demonstration and thereby contributes to realising all of my research aims<sup>164</sup>.

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<sup>164</sup> To review, see Chapter 1, section 1.5.5.

## CHAPTER SIX:                    **The use of fiction in a process of ethical self enquiry – from the personal (f)actual to the general ‘what if’?**

This chapter details the process of generating and creating *Parables* from the raw material my intuitive research practices yielded. It will also include reflections on this process and an appraisal of the utility and relevance of the creation and use of hypothetical case studies or ‘what if’ scenarios as an ethical self enquiry practice. Reflections are comprised, as per previous chapters, of personal observations regarding my experiences, which are then shared in concert with reflections offered by others as gleaned from a review of literature in Trawling Phase 2.

### **6.1     Masking the truth in order to reveal its true face: creating *Parables* to communicate narratives that cannot directly be told**

While many methodological gatekeepers consider the use of fiction within arts based social research as unacceptable, Barone and Eisner urge “resistance against such intimidation” because of the potential that fictive texts hold for “enhancing meanings of social phenomena that run counter to final, orthodox, seemingly settled interpretations and conclusions” (2012: 101). Drawing on the work of Patterson (2002), Squire (in Andrews et al. 2013: 48) suggests that in narrative research “narratives may address [...] *imaginary* events [...]”<sup>165</sup>, supporting the use of fiction, make believe or ‘what if’ as a legitimate research practice.

[T]he realm of the imaginary is an important aspect of the interactive context in which traumatic experience is narrated. At the very moment the narrator says ‘you cannot imagine what it is like’ or ‘you can never know what it feels like’, the listener is *invited to imagine*, to enter into a realm of experience which is not their own but neither is it any longer only the speaker’s (Patterson in Andrews et al. 2013: 40)<sup>166</sup>.

All of the practices I engaged in this study and which have been detailed in previous chapters revealed a diversity of specific real life situations and instances in which actions and behaviours, and practices and their delivery, were effectively recognised as being ethically contentious. At this level of specifics and actuality these embodied memories and experiences are messy, emotionally charged and highly subjective. They are clouded by all sorts of ambiguous motivations and intense passions which make them difficult to manage and work with. Real life situations are highly valuable in ethics precisely *because* they are true and reflect the complexity of lived experience; they thus illuminate the challenges of making and implementing sound ethical judgment and decisions.

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<sup>165</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>166</sup> Emphasis in original.

I strongly believe it is important for victims and perpetrators to tell their stories and be granted the catharsis and ‘healing’ offered by confession and ‘coming clean’. However, in the context of this particular study, guided as it is by institutional research ethics criteria and in which individuals and institutions are implicated, working at this level proved to be a significant challenge. Although I embarked on this study with the intention of sharing my own actual accounts of ethically questionable practices and behaviours and to encourage other educators to do likewise, I discovered that it would literally be impossible to relate my past experiences with the necessary detail without violating research ethics<sup>167</sup>. In the words of Barone and Eisner, my choice of fiction as an alternative in this instance was a matter of protecting “actual innocents” (2012: 119). ‘Innocents’ in this case refers to those who have not given informed consent to being participants in this study, rather than to those that are not ‘guilty’; in some instances, those implicated in my past personal experiences behaved in ways that were not only obviously unethical, but undeniably illegal.

Metaphorically speaking, I realised that the particular memories I identified in my intuitive research process needed to be creatively adapted to become the buried, invisible foundation of my ‘legō buildings’<sup>168</sup>, or the *Parables*. My first task when I came to ‘sort the catch’ of my explorations into embodied experience was therefore to translate my subjective and personal memories into stories containing themes (ethical considerations) that could be shared in a general context in an ethical way. This is in keeping with event-centred narrative analysis which “addresses themes, rather than causes” in the search for means whereby the restoration of “normality” might be attained through “human agency” (Squire in Andrews et al. 2013: 52). Uncovering these themes through narrative analysis demanded constant revision and improvement of my moral agency and ethical sensitivity; in itself this process of identification was a form of research into my evolving personal ethos and a form of ethical maturation/education. Analyses of the narratives captured in my *Ethics Evolution Journal* (Prigge 2014b), *Personal Ethics Questionnaire* (Prigge 2014c) and *Narrative of Personal Ethics* (Prigge 2014d) revealed a diversity of emergent themes. Many of these themes had a polarity or oppositional structure indicative of inherent or embedded tensions between ‘license’ and ‘limits’ and had contrasting values at work within them. They inherently held dramatic tensions which meant that they offered a superb repository of creative impulses I could use in the process of translating them into *Parables*.

As per previous processes, my approach to generating the *Parables* favoured artistic and creative practices and strategies versus a more structured, analytic or logical process. During the course of researching my past experiences, fragments of scenes and character sketches had spontaneously begun to make their presence felt. Much of the theatre work (especially Physical Theatre) I have created in the past has favoured a more intuitive process. Rather than having a set story or plot as a starting point,

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<sup>167</sup> I offer a more detailed account of navigating this ethical issue in Chapter 9, section 9.2.

<sup>168</sup> To review this concept, see Chapter 1, section 1.3.

the final theme or idea has often emerged through exploration and improvisation. I approached the creation of the *Parables* in much the same way. Instead of working from the various themes and ethical considerations that I had identified and forcing narratives from them, I followed creative impulses and allowed them to lead me to where they themselves wished to go. This meant that although the themes were now estranged or removed from their original foundations in my personal reality, they cycled back to achieve a high degree of verisimilitude to real life potentials. While the *Parables* are no longer ‘my’ stories, they are probable or possible stories that I, or anyone else, might/could have experienced in the habitus of performance and its education. I believe this approach allowed for a more complex and integrated relationship between form and content; it revealed how certain ethical concerns are interrelated and dependant on one another, and how various concerns overlap and appear across a diversity of contexts as they would do in real life.

Once drafted, I conducted a narrative review to articulate the suggested ethical considerations or themes each ‘story’ contains and tabulated these, referencing the narratives in which each is evidenced<sup>169</sup>. I then distilled these concerns further to reach what I would define as three overriding ‘territories’: 1. Inclusion versus Exclusion; 2. Illusion versus Reality; and 3. Art versus Education. I wrote the first drafts of the *Parables* in late March and early April 2014. Each draft underwent numerous refinements during this period, and I still came back to them repeatedly to enhance their relation to the themes they had already revealed until such time as I incorporated them into the first *rehearsal* (draft) of the *Performed Narrative* in August 2014. At such time I treated them as ‘finished products’ or artistic research based on my ethical self enquiry process (Trawling Phase 1) so that I could reflect on them as examples when it came to appraising the utility and relevance of using fiction in a process of ethical self enquiry.

## **6.2 Reflections on the use of narrative fiction and the creation of *Parables*, hypothetical case studies or ‘as if’ scenarios in a process of ethical self enquiry**

As per the 4<sup>th</sup> and additional step in *recapitulation* (‘stepping into another’s shoes’), the writing of the *Parables* may also be considered an advanced means of ‘re-memembering’ and ‘re-interpreting’ events in order to generate emotional objectivity and simultaneously foster empathy; in the same way as the re-telling of the *Narrative of Personal Ethics* from the perspective of accountability I outlined in the previous chapter. The *practice* of writing them emphasised learning and agency versus failure and the feeling of being historically abused or victimised. The use of imaginal projection in *recapitulation*, the *Parables* and my re-interpreted *Narrative of Personal Ethics* came to represent for me the potential for memories to be transformed through art into moral science.

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<sup>169</sup> A tabulated list of the suggested ethical considerations or themes, and the narratives in which they are embedded can be found in Chapter 7, section 7.2.1.

### 6.2.1 The relation of the *Parables* to virtue, intuitionist and situationist ethics

Haidt and Joseph (2004: 62) believe that virtue theories of ethics are “the most psychologically sound approach to morality” because “[s]uch theories fit more neatly with what we know about moral development, judgment, and behavior [sic] than do theories that focus on moral reasoning or on the acceptance of high-level moral principles such as justice”. They suggest that ethics began with virtue approaches, and they began *intuitively*. The earliest moral and ethical systems were educated through the shaping of emotions and intuitions versus enforcing rigid principles. The wisdom of Confucius and Buddha was delivered by means of aphorisms and metaphors designed to “produce flashes of intuitive understanding” (2006: 2). Parables and stories which exemplified “virtue in practice” (such as those taught by Jesus) were commonly used as a means to inspire moral insight (Haidt and Joseph 2004: 62). Such approaches emphasised practice and habit over reasoning and remained dominant until the middle ages. In the eighteenth century the philosophers of the Enlightenment began to seek means to sever ethics from religious belief and culturally specific injunctions, and it was then that formalist (Kant, Hobbes, Rousseau), consequentialist and utilitarian (Bentham, Mills), and various other ethical modalities arose (Haidt and Joseph 2006: 3)<sup>170</sup>.

Virtue theory values reasoning and deliberation but is arranged in favour of developing moral maturity through “a comprehensive attunement to the world” and the cultivation of “a set of highly sophisticated sensitivities” within the self (embodied virtues) and in relation to others (Haidt and Joseph 2006: 21). According to Luckowski (1997: 2) who references Nash (1987), “[a] virtue-centred approach to ethical judgment can help teachers strengthen their commitment to the professional and ethical obligation to serve others. It can stimulate the educator’s moral imagination and develop skills of analysis, discourse, and consensus”. The research of Donald Schön (1987) supports an educational approach which favours *professional artistry* based on reflective practice over technical rationality (Hogan 2008: 20). I would argue that such “skills” and “sensitivities” might be viewed as precisely the kind of acuties arts and the practice of drama and performance develop and enhance, both personally and relationally. As mentioned in Chapter Four, virtue ethics is in part a situationist approach to ethics in that moral competence is composed of “perception, motivation, action and reasoning” (Haidt and Joseph 2006: 21) working together in relation to the immediate situation with all of its distinguishing features; to frame this notion in the theatrical context, this is what Stanislavsky (1967: 34) referred to as “given circumstances” (or the notion of ‘spheres of existence’<sup>171</sup>).

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<sup>170</sup> Even though a number of psychologists and philosophers in the twentieth century, such as Dewey (1922) and Hartshorne and May (1928), recognised virtue theory as central and important to moral functioning, quandary ethics has been dominant for some time (Haidt and Joseph 2006: 3). However, virtue theories are slowly beginning to re-emerge in empirical moral psychology spurred by the work of Lawrence Kohlberg and others (Haidt and Joseph 2006: 20). “The philosopher Edmund Pincoffs (1986) calls this modern approach ‘quandary ethics,’ and he laments the loss of the older philosophical interest in virtue. Where the Greeks focused on *character* and asked what kind of person we should each *become*, modern ethics focuses on *actions*, trying to determine which ones we should *do*” (Haidt and Joseph 2006: 4). (Emphases in original).

<sup>171</sup> To review this concept, see Chapter 4, section 4.2.2.

Haidt and Joseph suggest that moral education and development should strive to avoid “top down” approaches or what they call the “direct route” of principles and rules to be obeyed without question (because they are not effective), and rather favour indirect strategies of “immersion” (2004: 65). Immersion in an emotionally charged and metaphorically rich environment (stories and examples, or *Parables*) can trigger innate moral modules<sup>172</sup> and intuitions, and link them with existing (already learnt) virtues and more universal virtues and issues. The arts can undoubtedly support such rich immersions. While rules and principles are useful to reinforce, these should, in so far as Haidt and Joseph (2004: 65) are concerned, be an adjunct and not the primary mode of education.

In part their reasoning is motivated by an understanding of “narrative cognition” versus “paradigmatic” or “logico-scientific” cognition as forwarded by Jerome Bruner (1990):

There are two modes of cognitive functioning, two modes of thought, each providing distinctive ways of ordering experience, of constructing reality [...]. A good story and a well-formed argument are different natural kinds. Both can be used as a means for convincing another. Yet what they convince *of* is fundamentally different: arguments convince one of their truth, stories of their lifelikeness. The one verifies by eventual appeal to procedures for establishing formal and empirical proof. The other establishes not truth but verisimilitude (in Haidt and Joseph 2006: 23)<sup>173</sup>.

Haidt and Joseph speculate that because narrative is a fundamental part of the human architecture, and stories are the bedrock of moral education, “[i]t seems plausible that human morality and the human capacity for narrativity have co-evolved, mutually reinforcing one another in our recent phylogenetic development” (Haidt and Joseph 2006: 26). A uniquely human capacity that makes narrative such an intrinsic part of what it means to be human is the imagination, one of the cornerstones of the artistic professions and our moral and ethical lives; as mentioned earlier it is also a distinguishing feature of some of the *recapitulation*<sup>174</sup> processes I engaged in my journey of ethical self enquiry, and a faculty I drew on extensively in the creation of the *Parables*.

### 6.2.2 *Parables* as hypothetical case studies or ‘what if’ scenarios

In recent years, there has been a slowly growing interest within a diversity of fields (including education, medicine, and leadership) towards employing drama, theatre and performance practices as a means to ethical training and decision making (Hogan 2008, Rossiter 2011, Cranston and Kusanovich 2013). Moral education and ethics training clearly overlap; however, where moral education is

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<sup>172</sup> “Modules are little bits of input/output [sic] programming, ways of enabling fast and automatic responses to specific environmental triggers. In this respect, modules behave very much like what cognitive psychologists call heuristics, shortcuts or rules of thumb that we often apply to get an approximate solution quickly (and usually intuitively)” (Haidt and Joseph 2004: 60).

<sup>173</sup> Emphasis in original.

<sup>174</sup> To review the discussion of imagination in relation to ethics, see Chapter 2, section 2.2.3.



focussed on the moral psychological and social development of the individual, ethics training involves learning about ethical philosophy and science - being exposed to and becoming appropriately informed about different models and frameworks, and learning how to deliberate and make sound ethical judgments.

Ethics training traditionally begins with developing sound moral reasoning: the ability to identify, address and carefully manage problematic issues, and then to “bring moral principles and specific judgments into harmony, consistency or alignment” (Cohen 2004: 25). Lawrence Kohlberg’s six stages of moral development often lies at the core of such training because it offers a clearly defined template, or an organisation of steps proceeding from concrete rationalisation, to a more conventional level, and then culminating in abstract or universal perspectives (Hogan 2008: 20). While often criticised by feminist thinkers for being overly focussed on justice and fairness to the exclusion of care and empathy (Haidt and Joseph 2006: 4), Kohlberg’s work is still hailed as being a benchmark in moral deliberation and education (Hogan 2008: 21).

However, advocates of the use of arts- and performance-based methodologies (Cranston and Kusanovich 2013, Hogan 2008, Rossiter 2011) suggest that having access to ethical frameworks, engaging in dialogue or discussion, responding to case studies (on paper or through video) from a safe remove, or relying on moral reasoning may create awareness, but does not necessarily result in “an empathetic understanding of complex decision-making processes” (Cranston and Kusanovich 2013: 29). Cranston and Kusanovich suggest the use of art-based methods such as role play and process drama to exercise the moral imagination and to ensure that attention is not only paid to the inputs of decision making, but to the outputs or the results and impacts, which should be clearly felt and experienced first-hand (2013: 29).

In short: ethical deliberation should not only result in a change in thinking, but a change in *being*. Inhabiting a role and actually taking on the orientation of the ‘other’ or ‘walking in another’s shoes’ can stimulate our empathy and understanding, granting us “a fuller picture of human frailty and strength” (Cranston and Kusanovich 2013: 29). In Ridout’s words, we “judge our behavior in the guise of an imaginary ‘spectator’ within us” and we also have the opportunity to “see others in light of our own creative imaginings of being them” (2009: 33)<sup>175</sup>. Performance techniques offer verisimilitude and also immediacy - direct engagement. Although Kohlberg’s model is rooted in reason, something within his thinking that is of significance to the application of drama techniques in ethics training is his conviction that conflict or perturbation was necessary for true moral development to take place, and for individuals to move from one level of moral maturity to the next (Hogan 2008: 20). A ‘shock to the system’, a moment of awakened conscience, is requisite. This is something that drama and

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<sup>175</sup> As quoted previously in Chapter 2, section 2.3.

performance techniques can assist with achieving in the relatively safe space of the ‘as if’ world. I say ‘relatively’, because as Kate Rossiter, in her argument for the use of performance techniques for training ethics in the medical profession suggests:

Unlike a notion of ethics that rests on an aim to settle, to problem solve, or to quell moral unrest, this version of ethics is deeply chaotic and unsettling. [...] Thus, to argue for performance’s ethical potential is to acknowledge the potential for discomfort and pain. In this instance, the notion of safety is ambivalent, as safety in terms of ethicality may not mean emotional safety or comfort (2011: 9).

Case studies are widely used in ethics training (Carter 1998, Hogan 2008, Cranston and Kusanovich 2013), but they are often critiqued for being “dry” or “clinical”, overly emphasising the technicalities of rational causes and effects, means and ends, or actions and consequences rather than illuminating the emotional and psychological realities of real people faced with contentious or difficult choices (Cranston and Kusanovich 2013: 31). Some contend that they are “a poor method of learning the kind of proactive skills required to balance against the kind of reactive pressures that are present in many difficult management decisions” (Cranston and Kusanovich 2013: 31). Yet, case studies, says Carter (1998: 3), become useful in the absence of direct lived experience, which is particularly relevant for pre-service and junior educators; “in anticipation of such experience” they “permit dialogue about competing perspectives, group and individual reflection and the collective and individual reconsideration of value positions”. I make a distinction between the process of reading a narrative or a case study, or in this case the *Parables*, and writing them. The extraction process required to write the *Parables* demanded a reappraisal and redefinition of past lived experience through techniques such as *recapitulation* which generated the raw data and actual emotions from which the *Parables* emerged. In my particular case, this called for confrontation of self and others in a manner that did in fact supply a ‘shock to the system’ and an awakening of conscience.

Cranston and Kusanovich (2013: 29) favour playing out “lived stories” because they grant access to the complexities and nuances moral actors are really confronted with. They suggest that every ethical framework that might be studied has a parallel in the dramatic arts in some form that can ground it in praxis (2013: 32). As an example they draw on Begley’s (2002) syntax of values to frame parallels with drama. In this model “values have syntax and are nested in ever-expanding circles or spheres [...]; we move from what is in our closest circle, considerations of self, to our motivations, to our understandings, to our values, and then end with attitudes that lead to actions” (Cranston and Kusanovich 2013: 32). In the same manner, they suggest, whether in drama for staged productions or applied theatre, one begins by understanding the character or attitude one is to play, and this is then developed and enhanced with postures, gestures and vocal dynamics. This character has to interact believably with believable others; it has to cohere to defined attitude sets (an ethos) in relation to the stimuli that others provide. This character has to act compellingly and with motive within the prescriptions of the scene or circumstance. In this way drama creates “images and referents” for what

an ethical framework might look like (Cranston and Kusanovich 2013: 33). “Case studies”, they suggest, “may be more like dramatic scripts than has been acknowledged. They simply may need to be played out before us and not just read in solitude for their full import to be discovered” (2013: 33). I found that authoring the *Parables* was in its own right a form of ‘playing out’.

Case studies can be enacted as scripts or perhaps even better, as Cranston and Kusanovich suggest, improvised. Enacted scripts may fail to develop the facilities required for spontaneous action and choice-making that mirror real life situations. This requires a well-developed intuition, sensitivity and attunement to the inner workings of the self and the impulses offered by others, all within the complex nuances of a specific context. “[T]he intuitive” says improvisational theatre visionary Viola Spolin, “can only respond in immediacy right now. It comes bearing its gifts in the moment of spontaneity, the moment when we are freed to relate and act, involving ourselves in the moving, changing world around us” (1963: 4). Referring to Grotz (1994), Cranston and Kusanovich (2013) emphasise the importance of embodied experience. While literature can engage the imagination, “only drama provides us with an approximation of how we might act and actually feel were we to be placed as an actor who had to play the scene” (Cranston and Kusanovich 2013: 35). I believe that approaching the writing of the narratives intuitively, as opposed to forcing themes onto them, liberated many of the potentials addressed above. Embodied experience is given a chance to make its presence felt.

Ultimately the value of drama as a means to ethical training lies in the fact that it can: enhance engagement; evoke empathy through understanding and enacted experience of diverse orientations and human perspectives; encourage the full use of the senses; provide embodied, immediate, tactile and aesthetically rich experiences; provoke the imagination; take in the full scope or measure of situations; and dynamically shift biases and preconceptions of self and other. It holds the power to provide “*models of behaviour* that can be practiced and performed safely” (O’Toole 2002 in Hogan 2008: 27)<sup>176</sup>. It can therefore, potentially transform deliberative ethics into an *active* ethics: providing a form of active versus passive imagination, and offering practical and dynamic rehearsal. In this way new neural pathways might be wired in the brain through repetition; in time these new ‘character structures’ within the ensemble of the self could become new organizations of habit and thus culminate, if engaged sincerely enough, in the development of virtues.

Case studies can tend toward the banal end of the spectrum, reflecting psychologically sterile characters that lack the depth of nuance and complexity to capture the ambiguities of lived experience. As artistic acts of embodiment, the process of stepping in to the shoes of ‘make-believe characters’ that were built on direct and indirect personal experience, the *Parables* created for this study differ from those usually employed in ethics education. Conventional case studies are usually set in

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<sup>176</sup> Emphasis in original.

quandary format, such as: ‘What would you do if?’<sup>177</sup> The *Parables*, by contrast, do not ask what should be *done*. They are thus in a sense far more open-ended, designed to illicit moral emotions and aesthetic responses rather than exclusively targeting rational thinking.

Why is it that we turn to literary texts for our moral education? Why do we learn more from narratives than from academic moral philosophy about what it is to be human, about the contingencies of life, about the kinds of lives we most want to lead, and about what is involved in trying to live those lives? (Johnson 1993: 196).

Martin observes that Johnson’s answer to this question is that “our lives themselves have a narrative structure”, and we “enter into the lives of characters and their situations” because we, too, are characters in the “circumstances of our own lives” (2011: 22). I believe that the power of the *Parables* created for this study lies in their verisimilitude to real life potentials, with all the nuances of psychological character such as complex motives and motivations, desires and drives, built in. As more ‘artistic’ renditions, they have metaphoric dimensions that can activate moral imagination<sup>178</sup>. Such activation of imaginal and visceral sensitivities and acuities can assist with fostering empathy and engagement on a diversity of levels that transcend intellectual apprehension. Weber touches on the power of such potential:

In humans, the empathy system spreads beyond its original motor and perceptual components as it links up with symbolic systems of storytelling, dramatization, and other fictional what-ifs. All of these are potentially adaptive, insofar as they help us anticipate possible worlds in which the cost of not knowing how to react can be severe. Experiencing them first as fiction involves negligible cost (2000: 161).

While the *Parables* certainly may be used as conventional case studies that may be of benefit to others, I found writing them to be a form of moral or ethical education in its own right. Dramatic writing is one of the art forms Fesmire (1999, 2003) uses to highlight his metaphor of *Morality as*

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<sup>177</sup> Carter (1998: 5-6) offers several examples, one of which I include here by way of illustration:

**“Case study 1**

A young male beginning teacher was coaching a junior hockey team after school on the school oval and at the end of one of the training sessions it started to drizzle. In the gathering gloom and cold two of the team members who lived most distant from the school asked politely for a lift part of the way home. Public transport was not available and the teacher wanted to get away too. Rather than wait around or refuse them, the teacher gave them a lift. A cleaner saw the two students getting into the teacher’s car.

- Why might the teacher have made the decision to give the students a lift? Is there a conflict of duty involved?
- What are the possible ramifications of this course of action by the teacher?
- Does this action constitute ethical conduct? Is gender an issue affecting decisions in this situation?
- If you, as a colleague, had seen this occurring what would your response have been? What principles underpin your action or decision?”

<sup>178</sup> For example, the cage *Jenny* finds herself naked and trapped in – representing her dilemma with her parents, whose surprise visit had her cornered into an exposure of aspects of herself they had not been privy to before. See *Parable 6* in Chapter 7. Or, the blindfold *Vernon* is asked to wear to symbolise the use of ‘deceptive’ strategies employed to reach improvised objectives and the accessing of emotional realities. See *Parable 10* in Chapter 7.

*Art*<sup>179</sup>. In this analogy moral thinkers and dramatists share certain traits, such as: a disposition towards rumination and the weighing and structuring of outcomes against character dispositions and habits; they take their time to revise and moderate pathways of action in draft format before settling on final copy; and they don't simply write randomly, spontaneously or compulsively. I found the writing of the narratives called me to consider the plight of the student/performer and enter into his or her orientation in a believable way, and the process of revision and refinement during the course of Trawling Phase 1 called for penetrating and understanding the themes I was working with in increasingly complex ways.

### 6.2.3 *Parables* and the stimulation of conscience and empathy

While I propose that the *Parables* create the opportunity for “immersion” in emotionally rich landscapes which Haidt and Joseph (2004: 65) say is critical in the process of stimulating innate moral modules, and thus hold the potential to activate conscience in this regard<sup>180</sup>, I acknowledge that this immersion may not necessarily be all good. To recall, mirror neurons fire whether we watch an action or simply read about it and our bodies apparently do not know the difference between an imagined or dreamed event and actuality. Our heart rate and chemical homeostasis is altered or upset irrespective.

Plato felt that there should be a censorship of texts that could affect impressionable minds, especially of the young who were most susceptible: “The message is clear: do not present vileness, conflict, violence, and other shady aspects of either divine or human behavior [sic], for the consequence will be a learning and subsequent imitation of such actions by the audience” (in Konečni 1991: 228). What this suggests is that the *Parables* might actually have a contrary effect to that which I anticipate or hope for.

Szlawieniec-Haw (2012: 4), discussing the impact of portraying acts of violence and abuse on actors, observes that those whose jobs involve working with trauma victims (even merely through exposure to questionnaires) may suffer from vicarious (indirect) trauma. Simply imagining how one would react in a similar situation may create duress. I know that I certainly was deeply affected by entering into the fictional lives of the characters I created. This was not comfortable. I experienced radical mood swings and numerous lingering emotional states ranging from aggression to depression while working with this material. Psychiatrist and biobehavioural scientist Marco Iacaboni (in Dobbs 2006: 2-3) suggests a strong case for imitative violence through exposure to video games and other media (such as films and, I posit ,theatre) which supports the possibility for the reader to be influenced negatively through exposure to negative material such as that contained in the *Parables*.

<sup>179</sup> For further exposition regarding this metaphor, see Chapter 8, section 8.1.

<sup>180</sup> This in keeping with Bruner's (1990) model of “narrative cognition” discussed previously in Section 6.2.1., which establishes truth, not through empirical proof, but through “verisimilitude” (Haidt and Joseph 2006: 23).

Both Konečni (1991) and Matousek (2011) make similar comments. Matousek (2011: 74) observes that virtual reality (of which such fictionalised accounts might be considered to some extent a version, as may the *recapitulation* exercises detailed in Chapter Two), “actually halts the feedback channel that our brain relies on as a way of anticipating other people’s needs and the impact our actions will have on them. [...] Free of face-to-face interaction, and the ability to mirror others, morality goes into cyber free-fall”. While speaking more accurately of media-technology, he suggests that without actually doing something in response to aroused feelings of empathy or compassion, we become inured because the result is that we “disconnect from feelings of real consequence” (2011: 75). This ironically supports Cranston and Kusanovich’s speculation that actually playing out ethical situations has far more value than simply reading about them.

Aristotle’s concept of the theatre however, was that it could play an ethical role in society through evoking empathy in the audience which would result in catharsis through the purging of negative emotions (Konečni 1991: 227). This has been both defended and criticised by various theorists (Konečni 1991: 227-228). Although Brecht felt catharsis was a needless expenditure of creative energy, he devoted much of his writing to disparaging it (Konečni 1991: 224). The criticism of catharsis through empathic emotional attunement is that it may lead to a form of apathy where the audience, restored and healed by the theatrical event, is not incited to bring about necessary change in everyday life. Brecht’s theatre sought to create a distance between the audience and the actor in order to ensure they remained critical, rational and capable of moral emotions such as, for example: the desire for equality, justice, contempt and indignation (Konečni 1991: 225). The audience should not be swayed and mesmerised or healed but incited to act. In his article *Psychological Aspects of the Expression of Anger and Violence on the Stage* (1991) Konečni himself concludes that while catharsis is indeed available for the actor who expresses and thus purges violent material, the opposite may be true for the audience who may be incited to violence (1991: 234-235). I found that albeit challenging, the overall process of creating the *Parables* had a purging and cathartic effect. In this sense the writer is the actor, playing out potentials again and again in subsequent drafts and processing and integrating the material on a deeply personal level.

Philosopher Emmanuel Levinas’ work has revolutionised contemporary understandings of empathy, yet he did not favour theatre; in his view it was a means to obscure the other, to present a mask in place of the other, to prevent a true face-to-face encounter (Aragay and Monforte 2014: 5). Aragay claims, however, that it is precisely this unknowableness of the other, the mask parading as ‘a face’, that contemporary commentators are drawn to in their vision of the ethical role theatre can play (2014: 5). It forces the recognition that the other is *not* the self, and this is what evokes accountability or ethical response-ability. It forces a recognition of the self in *relation*, in *contrast*, in *difference*; and can thus awaken true conscience. Ridout (2009: 69) suggests that it is because theatre obscures “being” in “images” that it can in fact awaken ethical reflection.



Rossiter proposes that what is perhaps most important to understand with regard to Levinas' conception of the encounter with "the face" (other), "is that in this encounter, the other addresses a demand to, or makes a claim or demand upon, the I. In this encounter, the other demands responsibility from the I" (Rossiter 2011: 4). In order to position her understanding of what Levinas implied by responsibility, Rossiter tackles the validity of contemporary understandings of empathy as implying the ability to 'walk in another's shoes', to embody the orientation of another, and most importantly to know how another thinks or feels. She suggests that this implies an "erasure" of other; an "assimilation" or ownership of the other; a making of the other into the self (2011: 5). "Thus, a critique of empathy as 'knowing deeply' emerges, whereby knowledge is understood as a destructive, totalizing force that determines the other, thus refusing to preserve the alterity of the other and reducing the other to the same" (2011: 5). For Rossiter, theatre should not simply evoke empathy in the audience; this would be to miss the truth of responsibility:

Rather, responsibility means, at some basic level, the provision of an open point of contact between one's self and another - relying on one's response-ability or ability to respond. This also may be referred to as the creation of an "inter-human" space. [...] Very simply, responsibility may mean approaching the other with the sole intention of giving one's self over to him or her, responding to him or her without presumed knowledge of who he or she is, or what he or she needs. Thus, this definition of responsibility-as-moral-conscience at once escapes the conceptual strictures of popular empathy. [...] This is to say that we are response-able, or able to respond, to theater with a willingness or openness to being moved, altered, disturbed or undone in the face of the (performed) other and to responding freely to the demand this face places upon us. Thus, response-ability takes on a dual meaning here, at once denoting our ability to respond to claims made by the (performed) other and also the ethical responsibility bound within this ability to respond (2011: 5).

Rossiter suggests that in theatre it is precisely because the audience *cannot* intervene on behalf of the other (the character/s onstage) and they cannot assist, help or console the character/s that the potential for true response-ability and an ethical encounter emerges. The audience is trapped facing the other and thus also facing themselves: moral conscience can be born. The audience cannot distract itself through getting physically involved, and thus, in congruence with Brecht's vision: "it is this awakened experience of the other, of our response-ability, that may be carried beyond the space of performance and into 'real life' relational encounters" (Rossiter 2011: 12).

Konečni quotes St. Augustine who seems to have observed something along the same lines centuries ago:

Theatrical shows, filled with depictions of my miseries and with tinder for my own fire, completely carried me away. [...] [W]hen a [man] himself suffers, it is usually called misery; when he suffers for others, compassion. But what kind of compassion is in the make-believe things of the theatre? A member of the audience is not incited to give help; rather, he is simply incited to feel sorrow (in Konečni 1991: 224).



I would suggest that the same ideas apply to the *Parables*. The reader cannot intervene but is called upon simply to bear witness. Commenting on the duty of art's beholder, Susan Sontag (2002) observed that "perhaps the only people with the right to look at images of suffering [...] are those who could do something to alleviate it [...] or those who could learn from it. The rest of us are voyeurs" (in Gilmore 2006: 191). Gilmore goes on to suggest that art places obligations "on those of us who behold art's manifestations: to be always more than merely voyeurs" (Gilmore 2006: 191). I don't think that it is entirely possible to 'step into another's shoes', nor do I think attempting to do so to be a matter of trying to possess or claim, or own or erase, the experience of another. Rather, this study has led me to the conviction that "empathy is born in the moment we see past our own selfishness and account for the other, as an individuated entity outside of ourselves, and as a representation of an experience or potential within us" (Prigge 2014b: 27). In this instant, I believe, is born the desire to entreat with the other as we would with ourselves.

I cannot say whether the reader will empathise with the fictional characters I created for this study or not. What I do know is that my empathy and thus my sense of, to borrow Rossiter's (2011: 5 terminology, "responsibility-as-moral-conscience" was undeniably deeply awakened and mobilised in the process of trying to stand in the place of the various characters I developed. Writing or creating is not the same as being a spectator or relatively passive receiver of a dramatic or literary text. For this reason I would argue in favour of encouraging educators to transform their lived experiences into *Parables* that capture, in so far as is possible, a high degree of verisimilitude to lived experience.

Something happens when we take an expected or anticipated audience into account in the process of creating art; in Fesmire's *morality as art* metaphor, this links to the acuity or ethical sensibility of "response of the other" (2003:118). Simply recalling or remembering my stories as they actually happened was a useful and necessary step in my process, but this did not always elevate or expand my ethical sensitivities or sensibilities. Recollection may *raise to* consciousness, but until we get actively involved in interpreting and shaping our memories and embodied experiences into usable (artistic) forms, we may not experience a *raising of* our consciousness. As per the 4<sup>th</sup> and additional step of '*stepping into another's shoes*' in *recapitulation*, I found that in order to transform my embodied experiences into fictional and artistic accounts, I had to process them; they had to pass through my system in various ways with each edit and creative adaptation. I digested, processed and then evacuated my hurts, slights, grudges, anger and shame. Both I, and my memories, were transformed in the process. It was not a pleasant experience, but it was cathartic and enlightening; and will, I believe, prove to be instrumental in my ongoing personal process of ethical/moral maturation.

This transformation was most apparent to me when I consider that despite the predisposition toward the 'serious' in the *Parables*, I do feel that the nature of the task of writing in a more artistic and

performative manner allowed for ‘play’. This is not to undermine the gravity of ethical concerns or to underplay the real or perceived potentials for abuse<sup>181</sup>. While certain issues had been extremely painful to explore and confront, when it came to transforming them into narratives I found a sense of humour that surprised me. It was a dark humour no doubt, but it nevertheless pointed toward an ability I gained in the process to begin to laugh at myself and life. This is, I think, a necessary counterbalance and in fact indicates an increase in sobriety and consciousness. Humour suggests being able to work with, and manage, the contradictions and the ambiguities involved in ethical self enquiry in such a way that it does not take the joy out of life.

### 6.3 Gathering in the net: the use of fiction in a process of ethical self enquiry

Earlier in this chapter Cranston and Kusanovich (2013: 33) suggested that created characters have to be understood in order to act compellingly and with motive in relation to given circumstances and impulses received from others, and that in this way drama creates “images and referents” for ethical frameworks. I feel the writing of *Parables* - that have their roots in reality but which are elevated to the level of ‘art’ - may assist with depersonalising and thus defusing the personal exposure inherent in such expression of past experience. Such narratives would also make it possible to share scenarios that reflect ethical concerns without imposing on the rights of others involved in past experience. In the context of a specific culture (such as a Drama, Theatre and Performance Department or School) it may be impossible to raise ethical concerns that are not somehow directly associated with experiences involving people present in the room. As such, fictional narratives may form a ‘buffer’ and offer sufficient distance from which to engage in dialogue and negotiate ethical value positions. As a practice, creating fictional accounts might also foster the development of the core ethical sensitivities that Fesmire identifies: perceptiveness, creativity, expressiveness, skill and response of the other (2003: 113-118)<sup>182</sup>.

More than anything else the *Parables* represent my attempts to more deeply understand my own experiences and transform them into something meaningful. As Didion (1979) puts it:

We look for the sermon in the suicide, for the social or moral lesson in the murder of five. We interpret what we see, select the most workable of the multiple choices. We live entirely, especially if we are writers, by the imposition of a narrative line upon disparate images, by the ‘ideas’ with which we have learned to freeze the shifting phantasmagoria which is our actual experience (in Iyengar 2011: 20).

When we act out narratives (in theatre, in the imagination or in daily life), whether they be self written or scripted by others, “we claim control no matter what our circumstances. And though our scripts and

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<sup>181</sup> For further exposition regarding the notion of ‘play’ as I refer to it here, see Chapter 8, section 8.2.

<sup>182</sup> See Chapter 8, section 8.1 for a more detailed exploration of these sensitivities.

performances may vary, [...] the desire and need for choice is universal. Whatever our differences - in temperament, culture, language - choice connects us and allows us to speak to one another about freedom and hope” (Iyengar 2011: 21).

When I came to reflect on the *Parables* in early rehearsals of this *Performed Narrative* I observed that they were, on the whole, negative and biased against the educator. This may in part be attributable to my interpretation of the overall nature of the research direction I had set myself; both ‘The Memo’ as an impulse and the guiding research question it led me to frame, emphasise problems and call for identifying ethical concerns. Browning and Boudès (2005: 34) observe that a major component of “sensemaking” in the work of organisational complexity theorists Weick and Sutcliffe (2001) is a “preoccupation with failures rather than successes”. In this model, failure is tied to learning, where things are seen in a new way and the surprise becomes a communicable story, even if it is “near miss” (2005: 34). The *Parables*, because they are art not fact, not entirely true (or entirely false), hold the power of being able to say “[t]his *might* have happened” (Browning and Boudès 2005: 34)<sup>183</sup>. Snowden (2003) asks whether stories of failure or success spread faster in organisations, and the answer is inevitably failures “because we realize that stories of failure are more valuable than success stories” (in Browning and Boudès 2005: 34). However, if “[b]est practice’ efforts in fact rely on the ability to identify *both* past successes and past failures” (Browning and Boudès 2005: 34)<sup>184</sup>, then the *Parables* are undeniably one-sided. On the whole they do *not* show good practices or demonstrate “virtue in practice” as good parables and stories which teach sound morals and ethical values perhaps should (Haidt and Joseph 2004: 62). On the whole they do *not* create role models that can be emulated; and this, suggests philosopher Samantha Vice, in *On the Tedium of the Good* (2005), the (neglected) responsibility of theatre and the arts in general, in a world where ‘bad’ behaviour and questionable character are increasingly glorified.

I vacillated regarding the idea of referring to the *Parables* as parables (teaching stories) in various *rehearsals* of this *Performed Narrative*. I finally settled with *Parables* because of the role that perturbation, or a ‘shock to the system’, might play in ethical education/maturation, as suggested by Kohlberg (in Hogan 2008: 20). This is also in keeping with Rossiter’s (2011: 5) “responsibility-as-moral-conscience” and Brecht’s emphasis on stimulating moral emotions such as the desire for equality, justice, contempt and indignation in order to incite the audience to take action (Konečni 1991: 225).

*Parable 16 Cindy* is an exception to the rule. Here an educator recognises the need for change and ‘breaks free’ of the “continuum of formation and habituation” (Seton 2010: 9). This was one of the last

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<sup>183</sup> Emphasis my own.

<sup>184</sup> Emphasis in original.

*Parables* I created and is indicative of a ‘paradigm shift’ in attitude<sup>185</sup>. The question is what will *Cindy* do now? As mentioned in Chapter One, a growing divide between those who have seen the need for change and those who have not might result in factions forming. I would suggest that a process of ethical self enquiry to conscientise, clearly articulate and ground her evolving ethical stance or personal ethos would be useful for *Cindy*; to prepare for negotiating new value positions in dialogue or discussion with peers and to resist intimidation. Also, translating her personal experiences into fictional accounts that could be shared as a demonstration of her revised orientations might serve as a gateway to dialogue in a non-confrontational way, versus simply overtly stating her newfound views.

The most important thing about the *Parables* is what they have come to symbolise for me as an outcome of a self-interrogative and deeply self-confrontational process of ethical self enquiry (Trawling Phase 1); and thereby what they might symbolise for other educators, and researchers, like myself.

Arts-based researchers do not discount the significance of many kinds of evaluation, but they are careful to expand the notion of evaluation as a kind of assessing or grading to attend to the root of evaluation as *valuing*. The question shifts from ‘*Is this good arts-based research?*’ to ‘*What is this arts-based research good for?*’ The evaluation of the knowledge generated in arts-based research includes a critical investigation of the craft and aesthetics of artistic practices; a creative examination of how art evokes responses and connections; a careful inquiry into the methods that art uses to unsettle ossified thinking and provoke imagination; a conscientious consideration of the resonances that sing out to the world from word, image, sound, and performance (Sinner et al. 2006: 1252)<sup>186</sup>.

I feel the true value of these *Parables* does not lie in whether or not they are *good* case studies, or whether or not they are *good* works of art; but I would argue that they *are* good representations of how the artistic sensitivities and sensibilities (*resources*) performance educators possess could be put to *good* use in a process of ethical self enquiry. Creating them is a *good* way of developing and enhancing core ethical skills. They are a *good* method for elevating personal experience (*resources*) from the level of the completely subjective to a level where it might have a more general value and utility. They may thus be *good* springboards for engaging in dialogue and discussion regarding ethics. Thus positioned, I believe the proposed practice of creating fictional narratives or hypothetical case studies based on actual experience can play an important role. As a *practice*, translating their experiences into fictional stories or *Parables* may grant educators the opportunity to ‘elevate’ their ethical self enquiry, and in the process their ethical character, into a work of art or ‘virtuosity’. Describing and reflecting on such a process in this chapter demonstrates both a *process* and *practice* of ethical self enquiry and thus contributes to realising all of my research aims<sup>187</sup>.

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<sup>185</sup> The notion of a ‘paradigm shift’ will be discussed at some length in the ‘Debriefing’ (Chapter 10) of this *Performed Narrative*. See in particular Section 10.5.

<sup>186</sup> Emphases in original.

<sup>187</sup> To review, see Chapter 1, section 1.5.5.

The *Parables* that my process of ethical self enquiry yielded stand in lieu of me directly or overtly expressing ‘this is right’ or ‘this is wrong’. They provide an opportunity for readers (including other educators) to observe their own reactions without being coerced or influenced into perspectives I or others might wish to enforce. I would therefore recommend that if the *Parables* are used in contexts of dialogue or discussion, they should be offered or presented without dictating to the reader or educator what the ethical concerns embedded in them are. Instead participants engaging with them should be invited to quest using their own ethical guidance system to uncover ethically questionable issues and concerns<sup>188</sup>. This maximises the potential for the discovery or revelation of a personal ethos through the activation of moral emotions, conscience and empathy; which, I came to discover, is what ultimately lies at the centre of this study’s orbit. As such they might defuse the volatility and potential friction that might arise between educators who hold strongly to differing value positions. They thus represent for me, as a demonstration of a creative practice of ethical self enquiry, a means whereby collective consciousness might be raised.

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<sup>188</sup> As presented by way of example in Chapter 7.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: **Parables or the artistic translation of (f)actual unethical experiences into hypothetical case studies or ‘what if’ scenarios**

The *Parables* and the tabulated inventory of ethical considerations and territories that follows them in this chapter effectively make answer to my guiding research question<sup>189</sup>. Furthermore, using my artistic and performative sensibilities and skills (*resources*) to interpret and translate actual personal experience (*resources*) into fictional accounts containing personally identified ethical territories and considerations that may need to be addressed, and which could be used as springboards for dialogue, directly addresses the second and third aims of this study<sup>190</sup>.

The collection of *Parables* to follow is situated as artistic research. For this reason the style (such as single line spacing and changes of font) deviates from that used elsewhere. Klein explains that some critics and authors may call for a verbalisation of artistic knowledge, and that it must thus be “comparable to declarative knowledge”, while others may argue for the fact that it is sufficient for knowledge to be embodied in the “products of art” (2010: 6). His view is one that I have come - through this enquiry - to appreciate, accept and embrace as my own orientation: artistic knowledge “ultimately [...] has to be acquired through sensory and emotional perception, precisely through artistic experience, from which it cannot be separated” (2010: 6). I believe the *Parables* grant the reader an opportunity to have an “artistic experience” of the ethical considerations and territories my various research practices yielded; this means “to have a look from outside of the frame and simultaneously enter into it” (Klein 2010: 3).

Each narrative is followed by the question: “Suggested ethical considerations?” In terms of these narratives fulfilling a function similar to ethical case-studies, this prompt grants the reader an opportunity to observe his or her own responses and to ‘see what comes up in the net’. This is in keeping with this enquiry fulfilling the role of demonstration (the use of personal experience as case studies) *and* education (an opportunity for moral or ethical deliberation).

Finally, and perhaps most importantly with regard to this *Performed Narrative* fulfilling the function of a demonstration, a briefing: The *Parables* hold a high degree of verisimilitude to a culture and contexts in which certain behaviours might be deemed appropriate and acceptable but which may differ vastly from that with which the reader is familiar/comfortable. ***The reader should thus be forewarned to anticipate, and be prepared to encounter strong language, sexual themes, nudity, abuse and violence in the material to follow.***

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<sup>189</sup> To review, see Chapter 1, section 1.5.4.

<sup>190</sup> To review, see Chapter 1, section 1.5.5.

## 7.1 The Parables

### 1. Lauren

Lauren is a committed Christian. From an early age she exhibits talents for singing, dancing and acting – activities she thoroughly enjoys. She takes drama as a subject at school and is consistently one of the most outstanding scholars. As she grows older and enters her teens she is encouraged by her parents and church elders to use her gifts in service of God. She regularly sings solos in front of the church on special occasions such as weddings, christenings and funerals, is a member of the adult choir, and directs and performs in youth group shows for the church.

When she is sixteen she auditions for a provincial group of young Christian performers who travel the region putting on dramas in churches. Most members of this group are young adults who perform in ministry work for a living and this idea excites her as a career choice. Soon she is one of the regular ‘leads’ in this group, often being cast in the most prominent roles even though she is a few years younger than most of the other members. She quickly becomes a role model amongst her peers, both in terms of her talents and also because of her commitment to her faith and her virtuous lifestyle choices.

Upon completing her schooling she decides to study drama at university, to hone her abilities so that she can pursue her dream of performing to spread God’s word. Despite being counselled and warned by her minister and parents when making her choice of study about the pitfalls and dangers of the performance world (with regard particularly to poor lifestyle choices and negative influences and exposures that, as they admonish, are clear to be seen amongst mainstream entertainers, artists and celebrities), she is convinced that her faith is strong and God will support her. She is admitted into the course based on her high grades in concert with a confident and versatile talent evidenced during the audition process. She does a short contemporary dance solo, sings a song and presents an acting piece where she plays Joan of Arc (a character she relates to strongly and can play from a place of heartfelt fervour). The feedback she receives is extremely positive. At no point in the selection and admission procedure is she informed that her faith may be an issue.

As the year commences she finds herself increasingly threatened by the culture of the university drama education context. Although she was prepared for the idea that the mainstream performance industry might be extremely counter-cultural and liberal, she thought that university, as part of the extended educational context, would mirror her experience at school, which does not appear to be the case. Lauren now finds herself cut off from the support network of her home and church, she is several hundred kilometres away in another province and city. She realises just how astute the advice of her minister and parents was, how different the culture of performance is, how strong and pervasive its influence. She is perturbed and bewildered that this licentious culture appears to be not only condoned by certain lecturers but in fact strongly encouraged; by some directly and blatantly, and by others more subtly.

At first she is relieved to make friends with other drama students who are also committed Christians; however, as the culture permeates every aspect of the lives of her friends she observes more and more of them either opting out of the course because of the pressures to conform, or submitting and ‘relinquishing’ their faith. As soon as they become part of the culture she observes that their general behaviour degenerates; they begin drinking and smoking, using drugs and become increasingly disregarding of any form of convention; they make use of foul language and even blaspheme comfortably. The more



they do this, she notices, the more the peer culture accepts them as ‘part of the family’ to which she increasingly does not belong. She too is desperate to belong, at times she is tempted to capitulate and ‘go with the flow’ as her peers encourage her to do - to ‘loosen up’. But she manages to stand firm in the face of what she views as temptation to forsake her values, virtues and entire belief system. Some of her ‘previous Christian friends’ become even more intolerant of her than others as time goes on, perhaps (she muses) because she poses a threat to them? She knows some of these ‘previous friends’ still pretend to be good Christians during the holidays when they go home for vacations (putting on a show for their parents and so on), but that they are quick to drop this act when they return to university. She considers them hypocrites and doesn’t know which act is more true for them; probably neither, but what does this make them? She knows she could never live with such ambiguity.

By the middle of her second year she is in a desperate place. She feels ostracised and stereotyped for being a Christian, and it is affecting her grades and health. Early on in her studies she approaches some lecturers regarding her feelings and position but she quickly senses that this makes things worse and that it in fact increases her stigma. She is told that in order to study drama it is critical to be open-minded and that holding to any rigid belief system is limiting. On the one hand she is told that performance ‘is just acting’ (so what is your problem?); and on the other hand she is told to ‘make it real’ or even at times that it ‘is real’. One lecturer often openly rants in class in a disparaging way about faith of any kind and refers to religion and politics as ‘brainwashing rubbish’ designed to turn people into weak and subservient slaves to convention. This lecturer’s attitude is that students of performance should believe only in art and in themselves - if in anything at all. As far as Lauren is concerned the counter-culture she is being asked to adopt is no different; it might equally be called ‘brainwashing’ - simply a substituting of virtues for vices.

Lauren refuses to play characters, or engage in practices and class exercises that contravene or violate her faith in any way; to swear, blaspheme, smoke, drink, reveal her body or represent lewd acts of exaggerated aggression or sexual perversion. She is particularly resistant with regard to opening herself up to being a channel for ‘energies’ or ‘forces’ to manifest through her (which often seems to be the objective of class practices and certain performance techniques). As far as she is concerned this is nothing short of becoming available to being ‘possessed’. At school she never had to do so, and she doesn’t see why learning to act, sing, dance and train her voice at university should demand that she does.

The more her lecturers and student peers push her to adapt and ‘adjust’ - the more they threaten her with remarks such as ‘you will never make it in the industry’ and ‘if you aren’t willing to go all the way you’ll go nowhere at all’ - the more she resists; to her own detriment. She loses out on opportunities to perform because (she believes) lecturers have become increasingly reluctant to cast her in productions; she suspects they see her as ‘*difficult to work with*’ (some have directly said as much) because she won’t simply do whatever she is asked to, or whatever the script calls for; if this means violating her values. Even when there are roles that do not contravene her values; still she feels deliberately overlooked. Lecturers are reluctant to change tasks and assignments to accommodate her and she is often asked to do individual exams in place of group work or to write essays versus practical assignments when lecturers can’t find alternatives to assess her work.

“What do you expect me to do?” says one exasperated lecturer one day, “change the whole course just for you?”

Lauren misses out on group interactions and the experiencing and mastering of a variety of skills she desperately wants to learn simply because (in her view) of how they are offered and not because of what they are. She slowly begins to lose confidence in her

abilities and consequently her grades plummet. She wants to drop out of the course, and her parents are concerned, but they can't afford for her to switch to a new degree. They encourage her to stick it out and to see this as a testing of her faith. She staggers through the three undergraduate years and by the end of it finds herself completely discouraged and doubtful of herself and her abilities.

She finally graduates with slightly less than average grades and wonders if her passion for performance has been quenched for life.

Suggested ethical considerations?

## 2. Jake

Jake has been working in the industry for several years when one of his ex-lecturers approaches him to ask if he would like to do some part time teaching at the university. Jake is 'between projects', he has just completed a short film and although he has a major production at a national theatre coming up in a few months he feels he might be able to 'fit it in'. It would be great to 'plough' some of his hard won experience in a challenging industry back into a crop of new talent and prepare them for what it's like 'out there'.

He is given undergraduate acting classes to run; first, second and third year groups of between 12 and 20 students at a time for 2-hour slots three times a week. While Jake is not a 'celebrity' in the definitive sense, he is recognised and admired by many of his new students for his work in theatre, television and film. He loves the fact that many of them are in thrall of him and this gives him a sense of power and authority in the studio.

His approach is 'cruel to be kind' – much in keeping with his own training as an actor. He pushes his students to get over their resistances, 'personal quirks' and 'hang-ups' and positions this with tales of his own experiences. "If you aren't willing to go the extra mile", he says, "you will never make it in the industry". He finds the 'threat of industry' to be a very useful strategy to motivate students to deliver – it was certainly one that worked on him when he was a student. He sees it as his personal responsibility to his students, the department and the industry to 'weed out' those that he believes don't have what it takes to 'make it'. This he sees as a 'kindness' – "*better sooner than later*", he thinks. He focuses his attention on those who 'have the stuff' and tends to ignore or pay less attention to those students who are resistant to tasks and don't seem willing to expose themselves or deliver. Those that do deliver become '*his student's*' – they do what he asks without question and are a pleasure to teach. He finds the rest to be a burden.

Jake's classes are not monitored or supervised by the department in any way and he uses this freedom to full advantage. He emphasises that the studio "is a safe and sacred space" and that "what happens between these four walls has nothing to do with what goes on out there" as he points to the world outside the window.

"What happens in here, is between us, so don't go blabbing about it to others. Here you can and must let it all out. Here, anything goes."

He challenges his students by drawing on exercises he did in his own training and devises new ones that will force them to confront their own limitations and help them reach the sensitive core of their feelings and beings. He is determined to liberate them, set them free of personal inhibitions and also of their social conditioning.

"An actor can't be a prude," he says. "Whatever beliefs and values you have that will get in the way of your ability to take on a character have simply got to go". "This is your

temple now", he states as he gestures the studio. Saying this makes him feel good. "This is not therapy" is the standard quip he offers whenever a student comes forward with personal issues. As he finds these stock phrases slipping so easily out of his mouth he realises that they were things his lecturers had told him during his training, and now for the first time he really sees their value and how right his teachers had been. He can't help it, and he might not openly admit it, but he feels a bit like a God - or a guru at least. Many of his students seem to worship him. It is great to be the one with the power now, compared with being a student. He feels he has earned this right and privilege through perseverance and hard work.

He shares the acting course with two other lecturers but there is very little communication during the semester between himself and his colleagues. While he is given course outcomes (in the form of examinable tasks he has to work towards for grading purposes) he is given license to reach these in his own way. Jake does not see himself as a 'lecturer' in the conventional sense because he is only working part-time and has a career on the go. When the time comes for his production he finds it difficult to keep up his classes and remain focussed on a busy and demanding rehearsal schedule. He has to skip some classes and also has to leave some early, but this is 'acceptable' because he is a working professional that is just 'helping-out' (even while he is being paid for his time).

He doesn't act or behave like a 'lecturer' because he never really saw his lecturers in this way when he himself was a student. Everything was easy and casual and familiar. He uses the same kind of language in class his lecturers used – full of sexual innuendo, crass, crude and confrontational. He enjoys 'shocking' his students whenever possible – all part of 'toughening them *up*' as he sees it, and 'waking them *up*' or 'getting them to grow *up*'. It is all '*up*'. All positive. That's his style.

He becomes very familiar with some students, they pamper his ego because they hang on his every word, and more and more he begins to socialise and hang out with a number of them out of class; mostly '*his students*'. He challenges these select few - over late night drinks in clubs and bars nearby the university - to embrace the life of an artist, to refuse to conform or pander to 'the prison of social conformity'. These discussions remind him of his own student years which he remembers fondly.

Some of the girls in the group are very attractive to him and in some instances this seems to be reciprocal - *especially Lucy*. He finds the underlying 'sexual tensions' in the studio and rehearsal space are actually useful in terms of exploring and generating 'energetically charged conditions' for creative work. He recalls a student production he was in during his third year that dealt with eroticism and sexual themes. The lecturer directing the process fired up the energy in the rehearsal process to a fever pitch and by the end of the production he had had intercourse with every girl in the cast. His girlfriend (who was studying law) found out about it and broke up with him. He was devastated for a while and so angry with her because she just couldn't understand that it didn't 'mean anything' – that it was the production and a part of the culture and his work.

In the position of lecturer now, he finds he can't resist when Lucy literally makes herself available to him. He senses she is trying to get close, to secure a position of favour. Despite his intuitions about ulterior motives, she is difficult to say 'no' to. Late night drinks seem to flow so very naturally into 'trysts' at his apartment that it just can't be 'wrong'. She is so vibrant, beautiful, and willing. He knows it isn't 'right' from a social (or maybe the university's) perspective, but he is a creature of the theatre – which operates according to different rules. And he suspects some of his lecturers did the same when he was a student. No, he knows they did. Certainly not all, but some; enough at least to make it fairly common. As long as it isn't advertised openly, stays in the culture and doesn't interfere with class work

he can't see any problems. He is an artist, a non-conformist, a rebel. In a challenging industry the perks are limited so you better take advantage of the ones that are on offer (so he consoles himself). Besides, he knows that this relationship is casual and he has no doubt that this is clearly understood by Lucy. He doesn't let this affect his grading of course, and remains utterly professional in this regard. Yes, Lucy happens to be on his 'A' list but then this is strictly because she deserves it, she has repeatedly evidenced her willingness in class to do whatever is expected of her without question or whining or resistance.

When Jake's semester comes to an end he is approached to teach again the following year and he happily agrees. It was a worthwhile experience and looks good on his resume too.

Suggested ethical considerations?

### 3. Trevor

"Stop!" An hysterical shriek that breaks out of the darkness to his right.

"Stop!" The voice is coming closer, bearing down on him from the pitch black gaping cavern. His hand is burning. He gasps for air.

"Stop, that's enough!" Closer still. He doesn't look for the voice. He looks down at his hand. Clenched white knuckles around the haft of a length of thick wood. He looks up into wide white terrified eyes. Simon. Staring at him. She reaches the stage and clambers up next to him breathing hard. The lecturer. The industry professional.

"Stop. That's enough." Her eyes are wild. He sees clearly the remaining glimmers of retreating terror, now fading fast to be replaced by ecstatic exhilaration as she stands facing him and fixes her gaze on him. "Good," she exhorts penetrating him with her eyes, as if to touch something buried inside his soul. He looks away, at Nick, at Simon. They are staring at him. He hears crying in the background. His eyes flick up to Simon's shaved head. He feels the weight of wood, the cudgel, in his hand. He has a lingering urge to smash Simon's head with it. To pop his shaved pate like a giant pimple with one determined swing. He is not sure why.

"*That's* what I am talking about!" says the lecturer addressing everyone on the stage now. "That, class...is anger." She looks at Trevor. "I knew you had it in you." She slaps him on the shoulder. "It was just a matter of finding a way to get it out." Her breathing is settling down. "What a breakthrough." Trevor sees her hands are shaking. He is still holding the piece of wood with burning white knuckles. He looks down at the heavy stage chair between himself, Nick and Simon. It is broken. Smashed to pieces. A deep gouge in the wood of the stage floor marks the spot where the deed was done. She is blabbing excitedly – the lecturer. He hears very little. He is trying to work out how he came to be standing here with a chunk of wood in his hand, holding it along with an urge to break Simon's skull. Simon, his best friend.

Fragments coalesce like flotsam and jetsam hurled upon the beach of his returning consciousness. He recalls now. Standing to one side of the stage. The acclaimed professional actress and director - his lecturer - shouting, commanding from up in the darkness of the auditorium. Hurling abuse.

"You have to dig it out of you. What, never been angry before? Come on. You will never cut it if you can't find your anger. Anger will get you through. Oh you are so sweet, shame, such sweet little children."

It begins to come back to him in a rush. The improvisation to release emotion, to express anger. He remembers wondering at first what on earth she wanted from them. Trying to find a way in, to understand what she was expecting of them. Wanting to please her. Wanting to show that he had it. Wanting her praise. But not knowing how to do that. He remembers...

The rest of the group were milling about on the stage and it all started when Simon shouted "Aaargh!" and punched the air.

"Please, I don't believe you", the disembodied voice sarcastically echoed from the sanctity of its shadowy shroud in the auditorium.

"Aaaargh!" Simon again, louder and more vehemently this time.

Jenny kicked one of the stage props that had been set out for the task. A metal wastepaper bin. It clattered loudly and noisily across the stage and fell into the darkness.

"That was cute Jenny, but I wanted anger, not the coquettish tantrum of a five year old that didn't get her ice-cream!" The voice bleats, grates, goads, incites.

"What about you Trevor?" He feels her gaze hot on him, honing like a laser through the darkness. He feels shame. '*What must I do?*' He flounders.

"Such a lovely boy Trevor, with your ready smile and can I please carry your bag to the car Miss. This industry will make mincemeat out of you if...you ever make it that far...which is doubtful."

He feels her seeking ways in. Seeking chinks in his armour. Seeking the seams that hold him together. Fumbling violently at the zip to his private self. He wants to please her. She has never spoken to him like this before. He idolises her. He is ashamed. He is embarrassed.

"Never been angry Trevor?"

Nick kicks over a chair. Simon Rushes over and grabs it at the same time Nick does. They have it in a tug-of-war between them. Katie screams. Jenny has retrieved the bin and is banging it against the proscenium arch. Now, Lindy joins in the screaming and then she and Katie are screaming at one another.

The lecturer ignores all of this; she has locked on to Trevor like a mastiff and he can feel she is not going to let go.

"Surely Trev you have felt angry before? It's human, normal. Are you so special then? Above all of us lowly mortals? Above anger?"

Her voice is a whip and her words burrow like lice through his skin which begins to prick and itch. He breaks out into a sticky sweat. He wants to move, to do something. To show her he can. To escape her jibes and attention. He is paralysed.

"It's ok Trev. No need to worry. Choir boys can at least sing for Jesus, so let's leave it at that." He takes a step forward. To do...what? He has no idea. He hesitates.

"Oh?" she says, "*it's alive after all...you want it, don't you? Come on. Admit it. All you have to do is be honest. All you have to do is admit that you have wanted to smash someone's head in because you were so angry with them - and then let...that...all...out!*"

And then.

Blank.

And then.

"Stop!"

Trevor turns to his lecturer. She is no longer talking. There is a moment of silence bar the sound of sobbing in the background. She looks at him, with a curious look on her face. *Unsure? Seeking something from him? A recognition of some kind? Affirmation?* The cudgel is still in his now aching hand.

"Excellent work Trevor," she says with heartfelt pleasure for him and a glimmer of satisfaction for herself. She seems genuinely pleased with a difficult result hard earned. He is not flattered as he thought he would be. He is not proud. He looks at Simon's shaved head. He feels the wood burning his hand and he knows.

The lecturer nods towards Nick and Simon. "A good start," she says, "with a lot of help from Trevor" – she smiles at him again. He didn't want to smash Simon's head in. No. No, he didn't.

The lecturer now rounds on the girls in the class who are huddled in a group in the wings. Melany and Katie are cowering behind the others. Melany is sobbing loudly and Katie has tears running down her cheeks.

"As for you lot, you can take a page from Trevor's book today. We will pick this up tomorrow and be sure to come prepared to show me you really want to be actors." There is no animosity in her tone, more a sense of loss, and even...*tenderness*?

Trevor lets the cudgel fall. It lands with a dull, hollow thud on the stage floor next to the splintered chair. He knows now. And knowing makes him feel empty and sad. Flexing his stiff fingers to get the blood flowing, he turns and walks over to his bag.

It was *her* skull he wanted to smash.

Suggested ethical considerations?

#### 4. Stacey

It is riveting. Stacey watches intently. She has such a clear view. On the floor are sixteen bodies. Unmoving. On their backs. To one side sits a man. Cross-legged. Eyes closed. He is talking. His voice is rich and melodious. He guides. With his words he weaves a story. No, a journey. She watches.

The bodies are arrayed like skittles knocked helter-skelter - where having fallen, slowly, each according to its own mysterious inner device unwinding – they finally settled. But she knows this is only the surface, beneath which the journey unfolds. The voice flows like a river, downwards, deeper ever deeper, like a torrent entering a bole in the earth and wending its way into the subterranean regions of being. The voice slows. Pauses...stretch...between...words. The cadences widen, their ripples flattening across the surface beneath which the journey unravels. It is not his words that tell the story Stacey realises, but his voice is itself the story. Its intonations are revelations.

She sees with a clarity that is a feeling more than a visual sense. Colours are rich and vibrant and course through her. Or she vibrates in sympathy with them. Details spring out acute and illuminating.

The body closest to her is that of a girl. She is ordinary and plain, her mousy blond hair held back from her face in a ponytail, her lips and cheeks natural, unadorned with make-up. The faint lines on her face speak of a soul that is tender – easy to mirth and feeling for life. A string of miniscule beads of sweat glisten like dew drops on the leaf of her upper lip.

On their backs, all in the same posture and placement, the bodies seem almost dead, like victims being prepared for interment at a mortuary. Inanimate compositions of flesh and bone, objects seemingly drained of life. Not so. Very much alive still. Dreamers all. Yet not sleeping. Awake...but to another, *different* world.

She catches movements here and there. A twitch in the leg of a boy, sharp featured, fine and long of limb, at the far end of the room. A spasmodic shudder from another boy, stout



and strong, chestnut red hair, stretched out beside the first girl's body. She notices in intricate detail how the first girl's ribs stretch and collapse to the rhythm of the voice – deep breaths widely spaced, echoing ripples that hint at hidden contours beneath the surface of the dream.

She sees now that all the travellers breathe as one, and that it is the voice that determines the tempo. Slow. Deep. Pulsations.

But...now...*changing*. The river dispersing its waters, having reached some invisible delta, becoming nebulous, thinning out, untethering, evaporating, becoming air. Bubbles rising. The words are lost to her now, she hears only the music of the guiding song. More urgent. Calling. The breathers below quicken their pace as one, chests rising and falling in unison - but for the girl she first attended to. The bubbles are rising on the voice, seeking surface. But the girl remains behind, breathing still deep and slow. She experiences a flash of concern, for what or why she does not know. The girl? Why does she linger when the others....the others what? Return. Yes. The voice is calling them back. Back home. Calling the dreamer back from the dream. Summoning the part that has roamed to unite again with its source. *Still* the girl does not move.

"They are leaving you behind," she wants to scream, but there is no voice.

She begins to panic which becomes more insistent when she realises that where her heartbeat should have quickened...she has no heart. She wants to gulp for air but she has no breath.

The others are moving now, stirring, sitting up and rubbing their eyes, stretching their limbs. The boy with the red hair gently prods the girl's body but it doesn't rouse - flops listless and deadweight. He laughs and others recognise, nudging and gesturing and joining in.

The man has stopped talking. He raises his hand for silence and motions everyone to move aside from where the 'vacant' girl lies.

He is standing above her now, she who is still in the depths of the dream, far away, somewhere other. Stacey knows the girl's face. She knows too the scar on the hand where the hunting knife left its accidental, fumbled mark when she was nine. Recognition is a shock. She knows herself. She is looking down from the ceiling, from where she has been hovering above the room. Below her the man crouches slowly beside the body, *her* body.

She is horrified, terrified. Her whole world is turned upside down and she is looking at it the wrong way up. She is here but her body is there. She can't breathe, can't scream, has no beating heart. The man is holding the body, *her* body, firmly by the shoulders, talking calmly. She feels nothing. She reaches desperately for that touch, seeking contact, connection, confirmation.

The group is gathered around anxiously, shuffling, fidgeting – the movements and postures an unuttered admixture of curiosity and concern.

Now she can hear words, they break into the silent solitude of her voyeur's domain.

"Come," says the voice, "follow me". She follows. The voice guides. She is comforted. The voice knows the way.

And then she feels the warm and heavy embrace of flesh. She feels reassuring hands on her shoulders. The comforting solidity of the floor beneath her weight. Stacey can again feel the cool air as she draws it into her lungs. She opens her eyes to her familiar world.

Familiar, yet entirely and irrevocably – *irredeemably* - changed.

Suggested ethical considerations?



## 5. Charlie

"When I was 26," says the lecturer gently to Charlie, "I had to make a similar choice. It is a difficult choice, but...possibly one of the most important choices you will have to make".

Her face is close to his, a bit too close. Her breath smells of cigarettes. Charlie's heart is in his throat, a hard lump. His mind is seeking purchase.

"Not *quite* the same but similar," she says.

He senses she means well. That this story has an agenda, but that beneath it there is a genuine concern for him. Or is there?

"I had just finished putting my make-up on," she continues, "when the stage manager came in to tell me my boyfriend had been killed in a car accident." There is a momentary flicker in her eyes, as though tears deep down had reached for an instant, to find a way through, but having found no escape fell back unshed.

Charlie does not know what to say. "I'm sorry," he blurts, ungracefully. He is 18 years old and ill-equipped for this.

"No matter," she says with a casual smile. "It was a long time ago. The point is Charlie," she goes on, "that I still went out and performed my heart out for 3 hours." She pauses, looking at him, the moment gaps dramatically.

He senses she is expecting a response. Like "Oh wow!" or "That's amazing!" or "You're incredible!" - something. But nothing gets past the lump in his throat.

"That night I truly became an actress," she says, "that night I realised who I am and why we do what we do. The show must go on". She looks intently at him again.

He wrings his hands and tries to understand. Tries to see how what she is saying correlates with his situation. "But, that was a performance," he says. "A professional performance. The audience was waiting. I am just asking if I can go to my niece's Christening. And..."

"And," she says, following his train, "you think this is different because you just want to miss a rehearsal. A *dress* rehearsal." There is a colder look in her eyes now.

"Yes," he says firmly, his lips tightening into a thin line. That is exactly it and he can see a difference.

"Well Charlie," she turns away from him and looks down toward the stage where the cast is blocking through a scene, "to me it is all the same. This moment is where you are going to have to decide. You can wait till you get into the industry or do it now as a student. But if you want this life then you will have to decide sooner or later. So I'm going to make it easy for you."

Charlie butts in – "but I am not even one of the leads and we have another dress rehearsal on the Monday night. I'll be gone Saturday and be home late Sunday night."

She turns back to him. "As I was saying," she says slowly, and somehow - strangely again - not unkindly, "I am going to make this easy for you. A kind of gift."

Charlie is flummoxed. '*She really is trying to be good to me, yet it doesn't feel like it,*' he thinks to himself.

"Your Christening," she says...

"My *niece's* Christening," Charlie corrects her.

"...*the* Christening," she says shortly, "or the play. The choice is yours."

Charlie can't actually believe what he's hearing. "Seriously?" he asks.

She nods. "*The* Christening is in two weeks time which means I can replace you, and the production can continue without being ruined due to a lack of commitment on the part of a performer."

Charlie feels his ears burning bright red. Shock, hurt. Anger. He was worried about approaching her this evening, but he never thought it would turn out like this. He thought she might be upset, but...

"This is a turning point for you Charlie," she says gently again. "Sooner or later you are going to have to choose and the choice is never going to get easier."

"But I will make sure that I'm ready," says Charlie, "I already have my lines down and some of the leads don't even have theirs down yet."

She cocks her head incredulously at him, one chiselled eyebrow raised. "Oh," she says, "I see."

"See what? I can do this, I won't let you down," Charlie is determined. He wants to do the play, badly, *and* he also wants to be at his one and only niece's Christening. Not for *her* so much, she's just a baby. For his big brother. His brother who looked out for him. His brother and friend.

The lecturer stares at him for a long time. There is silence between them. She can see he is resolute. "I think you should go," she says.

"I can?" he feels his spirits lift.

She nods. "Of course you can. There is always a choice."

"*And* do the play?" he asks.

"No," she says. "This is not only about you Charlie. Not for a moment have you thought about them," she gestures with her head to his fellow cast members on the stage. "Missing the dress rehearsal has nothing to do with whether you can handle it or not, or whether we can stagger through your scenes without you or not. This is a family Charlie. And that's what this choice is actually all about. You have to choose which world you want to live in."

"Can't I live in both?" He asks.

She shakes her head, a glimmer of melancholy tracing the lines of her face.

"But it's just a student production," Charlie continues, "I'm not a professional. Nowhere in my course outline does it say that I can't be a normal person. That I have to choose between my family and my studies."

The lecturer listens closely and then responds in a tone that suggests that the conversation is coming to a close. "No," she says, "you are *not* a professional. But you could be one day. You have a lot of talent and are the only first year to have been cast in this production. If you arrive at rehearsal tomorrow evening, then I'll take it you want to be a professional and the choice we are talking about has been made. If not, then the choice has still been made, and I will recast your role."

At that, she stands up and begins to give instructions to one of the actors on stage about a casket that needs to be placed more stage left so that it doesn't trip up the 'dancing dainties' when they make their boisterous second entrance.

Suggested ethical considerations?

## 6. Jenny

The metal of the cage is cold to her naked breasts as they slap against it. Colder still because her breasts are hot. Her whole body is hot even though it is dark mid-winter night in the faraway world outside of the theatre and the bright cocoon of its stage. Her whole body is hot even though she is completely naked. She burns with shame and anger.

Again and again the cold sting of metal as her large breasts beat the unyielding bars - these breasts she is so proud of, these breasts she suspects helped land her the role even before they were revealed to hungry eyes. These breasts her father is seeing for the first time.

She can feel his eyes behind the benison of darkness that hangs like a protective but flimsy veil between them. She is an ostrich with her head in the sand, gratefully blind yet visible to all. The last time her father saw her naked was when she was ten years old. The last play he saw her in - at school eighteen months ago - had the school committee and the headmaster rushing to intervene and change the script: "Oh my god!" to "Oh my gosh!", "Slut" to "Dark Lady" and "tits" to "bosom".

Her bosom begins to strike the bars in quicker succession as her 'boyfriend' - in this second of three 'sodomy' scenes in the play - rises to climax and cums loudly before pushing her to the ground and pulling up his pants. The clever little squeezable bottle with its tube sewn into the pocket of his trousers finishes the effect - he 'urinates' on her, does up his zip, and leaves her lying on the floor as the lights fade to blackout.

In the darkness her mind is reeling. She is furious and ashamed. She is going to use this anger, as she always does, in the last scene when she stands naked and covered in blood over the 'dead body' of her 'boyfriend'. But her father will see this, too. And her mother. Maybe this is even worse? Her triumph will become a hollow thing, even more revealing than her nakedness and defilement.

She told them not to come. When they arrived at her doorstep this afternoon and she opened the door, bleary eyed, in her knickers and a loose T-shirt (thinking it was one of her new 'classmates with benefits', or the guy from last week who keeps pestering her even though she told him a hundred times it had only been because she was drunk) she was horrified. As were they. Although they didn't show it. Or tried hard not to show it. Or hid it rather poorly. Dad just avoided sweetly, and Mom fussed her into her room to 'make yourself decent'.

"Surprise!" They had made the two day trip because it was 'her first big role at the big university' (they were scrimping and saving to send her to). She told them not to come but not why. She couldn't tell them *why*.

Why? She was thrilled to have finally got a meaty role. This was her chance. She was desperate. The other students were getting ahead of her. She needed this. Yes, it bothered her that it was as an abused woman who had to be 'sodomised' three times and use filthy language and go naked on stage for a full forty five minutes before 'stabbing' a man twenty times to finally finish him off. Yes, it bothered her that she had started having nightmares. Yes it bothered her that she had started drinking heavily and had started taking both strange and familiar men home when she had never had sex in her life before this. *Why?* She was ashamed but she didn't want to look at that. She didn't want to know *that*.

She didn't want to feel ashamed, but proud of herself. Which she wasn't, but that was *their* fault. *They* made her ashamed. They shouldn't have come. They should have stayed away, to let her become what she needed to become. To succeed. Three months ago she was just another second year. Now she was co-star to one of the leading male honours students. Now, everyone recognised her. Now, everyone told her she was excellent in the role. Her performance was 'raw', 'powerful'. It was almost as if she 'wasn't acting'. Her shame and degradation was 'palpable'. She was someone now.

She told her parents that she was going out with the cast for a party tonight after the show. She didn't want to face them, because they threatened to strip her of what she had now gained - at great cost - by removing her clothes. But Dad insisted that she meet them in the foyer first so that he could tell her how proud he is.

"But you haven't seen the show yet," she said.

"I am always proud of you my Angel," he said.

Tonight would be a test of that.

In the darkness before the final scene she feels bile rise in her throat and she is suddenly cold and shivering. As the lights come up all she can think is that she will desperately need to get blind drunk after that meeting in the foyer. How...how is she going to get through *that*? She told them not to come, it's *their* fault.

Her anger begins to grow. Maybe she will use it. Not only for the scene. But to push them away. Because she is ashamed. Because she is ashamed to admit to the lengths she will go to get what she wants. Because they have never seen this part of her before. Because she never knew it was there. Because a part of her *doesn't* want it, but she can't stop it, and doesn't know what to do about it. Because she wants to cut that part out of her, and cut out Dad and Mom with it.

Her 'boyfriend' enters the stage and undoes the padlock on the cage he keeps her in. He begins unzipping his trousers, whistling a little ditty.

She reaches for the concealed knife.

Suggested ethical considerations?

## 7. Mark

"Jesus! The shit I have to put up with! What fucking accent *is* that? That is not a German accent's asshole!"

The casting director *stomps over to the window and butts it open with her elbow while simultaneously flipping open the pack of cigarettes with a single thumb and extracting one with two fingers of the same hand and flicking it into her mouth while lighting her Zippo with the other hand and bringing it to light up draw exhale and wreath herself in smoke* - all in one well-oiled fluid motion. The sequence is undeniably beautifully executed. Graceful even (despite the 'stomping'). Mark would have been more impressed if he wasn't standing there being shouted at. Or, if he wasn't standing in his chequered undies with a plastic helmet (ridiculously too small, probably a hurried purchase from the toy section at the Mini-Mart down the road that morning) and a plastic semi-automatic in one hand (also no doubt from Mini-Mart – probably came in a 'pack' along with the helmet. He wasn't given the grenade and even looked for it on the props table. But then that's for the second scene and right now he has a feeling he might not get that far). *Or*, if her silhouette against the glaring mid-morning sunshine - now streaming into the casting studio - did not accentuate her eight months pregnant figure in such an obvious way.

"What accent *is* that?" she asks dragging more slowly this time, savouring the smoke, and then angrily flicking the unfinished butt out the window before closing it with a bang and returning the room to its previous state of a single redhead (shining straight into his eyes).

"Norwegian?" Mark suggests. The truth is he tried to get a World War Two movie out last night like his agent suggested, to source accents, and he did...only all the accents were American. Even the Germans.

"What? I am *not* a fool. How many times do I have to tell them?" She paces back and forth behind the camera and her assistant (19, sheepish) who is hiding behind it (pretending

to do something with the 'settings'). "Blond, tall, and good accents. This is an international film for fuck sake."

At five foot eight with jet black hair Mark suspected this was not a good idea. Also, he sucks at accents. Always has.

"But it will be good experience," his agent had said on the phone when he expressed his reservations. "It will give you a chance to keep your skills up and also meet the casting agent. She has clout and draws good projects. You have to get out there and expose yourself."

That particular part has proved quite accurate. Mark feels *quite* exposed. "Can we take it from the top?" he asks.

The casting agent doesn't even say anything. She walks to the 'dressing screen' (a cloth tied at one corner to a *mic* stand with the other corner jammed into one of the closed windows) and grabs his bag and clothes. She walks to the door, throws it open and dumps the bundle out into the waiting room (full of male and female actors of varying ages), stomps over to him, takes off the helmet, grabs the 'gun' (all very fluidly executed once again, Mark must confess, almost rehearsed) and says, "I don't think so. If anything that was a *bad...very, very, horrible...Mexican* accent." She gestures him up and down with one loose-wristed hand and an incredulous look on her face as if to say 'blond? tall?...*no.*' Before turning and shouting, "*next!*"

Suggested ethical considerations?

## 8. Conrad

Why Ulrich, his new movement lecturer, chose to hug him particularly Conrad does not know. Fate? Sometimes that's simply the way of things. Vacuums beg to be filled? Water flows into the open space? Opposites exerting some mysterious attraction? Who knows?

The first year class had gathered in the centre of the room, as instructed, and Ulrich had taken roll call and then joined them. Everyone stood waiting, fidgeting, nervous and excited, not knowing what to expect in their first ever university movement class. The boys pretending to be at ease, trying to fight their self-consciousness in jock-straps and black lycra tights (some feeling the 'cut' of the thong between their butt cheeks, and the cool silky-stockinged-hug of the unfamiliar material tight-against-sensitive-skin for the first time). The girls in their one-piece black lycra body-suits setting up an undulating rhythm of movement in the space, (like chickens feeding in a battery, heads down, heads up), arms crossing in front of their breasts, clasping in front of their groins, joining behind their buttocks – shifting, shifting sands blown before self-conscious exposure, not quite knowing where to settle.

Ulrich, an open expression on his face - showing he is 'there' with them - present - available to making a *real* connection - making eye contact directly with one person at a time, moving systematically through the group. A gesture of welcome and recognition. A sincere gesture, well meant. A simple and honest gesture...that flounders on the rocks of their discomfort. It is too sudden, few of them are ready. 'Welcome' becomes a confrontation or violation. As his eyes settle and connect with each fresh new student's, the twenty-five year age difference between them gapes like a chasm; they can't meet him where he is, they force the jump, they turn the eye-contact-meeting-greeting into a challenge and test, a staring down versus a shared communion; or they wither like daffodils in the sun, shrinking like puddles evaporating in a too bright light - clearly relived when it is

over and his clear, blue, gentle eyes shift on to the next pair of anxious or defiant 'windows to the soul'.

Then he returns his gaze to Conrad, Conrad who had barely made it through the 'eye-contact-greeting-connection-welcome-test', Conrad who could not bear the intimacy of that open gaze, who had never 'met' another person in such a manner in all of his life – let alone a mature male. Conrad squirms.

And then Ulrich is moving toward him. Conrad feels identified, isolated, as if a giant spotlight has suddenly switched on above his head and is shining down from the heavens saying: "Yes, *this one*". And then Ulrich stands in front of him, looking into his eyes, hands on his shoulders.

And then Ulrich is hugging him. Closely, firmly, full body contact. Parts of their male to male bodies touch that Conrad has never felt touching before. The lycra is thin, evaporates, seems to suddenly peel away like stretched and pricked latex between them. He feels stirrings that he wants to drive away and the lycra, he knows, is merciless - the entire point of tight fitting clothing in a movement class, he was told, is that it will not hide a (his) thing.

Then Ulrich steps back, hands still on Conrad's shoulders. Still making eye contact. Then he drops his hands and takes another step back, holding eye contact. Conrad is glowing. He is awakened in ways he never knew possible. Ashamed, embarrassed and elated and confused and angry and exposed. He is blushing he knows, this he cannot hide...and that is a trifle really. The 'pressing issue' and focus of his attention is at his front - he wants to cover 'it' with his hands, but he senses that if he moves, he will draw attention, and it is already slowly beginning to subside as he gains a bit of control. And thank God Ulrich is now talking, diverting the attention away from his excruciatingly revealing reaction (did anyone notice?).

"In this class," Ulrich says warmly, moving his eyes to seek and meet those in the group that make themselves available and return his contact, "we are going to get used to our bodies, and the bodies of others." Fidgeting, squirming, shuffling. "We are going to make friends with our bodies, and peace with our bodies." He reaches out a hand to a girl, Maria to his left. She takes it confidently and holds his eye contact.

(Maria is one of Conrad's new 'friends'. He has made 'friends' with several girls in the class already even though this is only the third day. He makes friends with girls easily. At school his friends were all girls. The boys he is intimidated by. They are 'other' to him. He has three sisters and his Dad left when he was six. His body is comfortable touching the soft curves of the female form. It is comforting and reassuring. Girls bodies don't make him get all flustered and confused).

For a moment, Ulrich holds Maria's hand firmly and neutrally. The touch is unambiguous and meant to be non-threatening. It holds no hidden agenda and means no more than touch. The message is clear. Yet, despite Ulrich's best intentions, *'it does depend whose hand forms the other end of the connection'*, Conrad muses.

"As performers, we have to work physically with each other," Ulrich continues, moving now to rest his hand on a boy's shoulder. The boy manages any discomfort he might be feeling well. He is secure in his strong and muscular body. He is unthreatened. Conrad thinks he has a nice face. "We are going to be doing Contact Improvisation this first term," says Ulrich moving now to another girl and extending his elbow to her. She doesn't know what to do. Ulrich again gently extends his elbow - inviting connection - and, now recognising his intent (with a great sense of relief) she extends her elbow and the two hard joints make light contact. Ulrich nods and smiles, she smiles back. There are faint giggles in



the room accompanied by a shift in tension, and a different kind of 'shuffling' now that indicates a release of pent up charge.

"Contact improvisation," says Ulrich, gesturing the group to sit and kneeling before them, "is a de-sexualised movement form that centres on basic laws of physics. Contact improvisation offers us the opportunity to touch, make contact, and become accustomed to one another's bodies without all the confusions that may exist socially between same or different sexed bodies, and it also creates a space where hormones," he pauses and smiles knowingly at the group, anticipating the expected outbreak of nervous giggles, "don't rule the experience."

Conrad is not so sure.

Suggested ethical considerations?

## 9. Shelley

When Shelley reads her name on the preliminary casting list she is over the moon until she sees that Michelle (one of the best actresses in the department and her senior by one year) is also down for *Lady MacBeth*. They both have call-backs scheduled for Monday. As she is standing there, deep in thought, her lecturer and the director of the production, Gideon, walks down the passage and sees her.

"Ah, Shelley," he smiles, seeing her pondering the casting sheet, "so?" he asks. She turns to him. "So," her voice is trembling, as are her hands, "a bit overwhelmed right now," she says.

"I understand. But all good, no? Come into my office and we can talk about it," he suggests, taking his keys from his pocket and stopping in the doorway. "I was hoping to catch you so that we could chat before the call-back anyway. If you have time now?" he cocks his eyebrows.

"Of course, yes, I mean I have finished classes for today."

"Good," he turns and disappears into his office. She follows down the empty passage. He pulls out a chair for her and seats himself opposite, behind his desk.

"So," he leans over the desk and looks at her intently but kindly, "overwhelmed you say?"

"A bit," she stammers. "Thrilled too. But Michelle...she is sooo good. Much better than me."

"Don't say that," he frowns and settles back deeply into the chair. "You are every bit as good as she is, and you know you are playing at being coy and modest. Come on. You know it. Say it."

"Well, I believe in myself, but she *is* good. She has much more experience".

"True," he says, "and experience is important, but you have...raw talent. I am not saying she doesn't. But you have something special. I noticed it right away during your audition when you first came to us. There is something...truthful...honest in your work. Like there is a shadow lurking behind your careful exterior," he smiles in a manner that transforms this last statement into a subtly probing question, or knowing confidence.

"Thanks", she replies, I..." she looks for words and then falls silent.

"Overwhelmed is good," Gideon picks up, "overwhelmed means that you respect the work of another...which is good. It is good to keep humble and on your toes. But it is also good to be confident and clear about what you are capable of".



"I suppose," she says, blushing slightly. "But I'm not sure if I *am* capable".

"Oh, I know you are capable" he says, "from an acting point of view. But," he pauses, looks at her intently, as if seeking the right words, "...and this is really why I wanted to talk...there is something else...so I'm glad we can have this little chat".

Now Shelley feels vaguely concerned. "Yes?" she enquires tentatively.

"I explained during the audition process what my vision for this character is going to be, her costume, her style, energy and vocal dynamics and so on?"

"Yes", she says, "sexy, the Madam of a boudoir or brothel, low-cut evening gowns - *but* made from stitched black leather and *not* fabric – cultured voice, elegant use of the hands... "

"Impressive, you were listening," he chuckles lightly and rubs at his beard. "Yes," he says, and looks at her searchingly, as if assessing something.

"Yes?" she asks tilting her head enquiringly.

"Yes," he smiles, "the thing is..." He pauses.

"The *thing* is..." she searches.

"The *thing*...is, and you must understand I am speaking now of a style, an aesthetic, a look..." He trails off again, hesitates.

"The voice, the black leather..." she offers.

"That too of course, yes," he agrees, "...but more about the aesthetic of the person *in* those costumes, or how can I put this," he rubs at his beard again and smooths his moustache. "How Lady MacBeth *wears* the clothes...how she *fits* into them. How they sit on her...body."

Shelley is feeling deeply uncomfortable and queasy, she anticipates a lurking criticism to come although she doesn't quite know what it is, yet...she suspects...and is afraid. *Not that...please.* "How I fit into the clothes," she says.

"How *Lady MacBeth* fits into the clothes" Gideon corrects her.

"Yes, sorry, Lady MacBeth," she smiles wanly.

"The thing is Shelley, in terms of the look and feel of the character, I have something very specific in mind. Your acting is there but...and I might as well just say it plainly, I need you to lose a full dress size in weight." He considers her evenly, not blinking. She gazes back at him. "Can you do it?" he asks, resting his elbows on the desk, hands clasped before him. The silence between them stretches. He breaks it by reclining again and waving his hand in a dismissive gesture, "and you must know there is *nothing* wrong with your figure, you have a lovely figure. But this is not about you. It is about the aesthetic of the character. And not only the aesthetic...it goes deeper than that, it is about the nature...the personality of the character. Her personality, her drive, her control is...*thinner*...if that makes any sense?" He raises his eyebrows in search for her response.

"A full dress size," she asks incredulously, "in three months? I don't...I..."

"I know actresses who have done more than that, and in this industry...I wish it wasn't like this...but..."

"It's all about the looks," she finishes for him.

He nods, "unfortunately, looks have a lot to do with it. It's simply the way of things. Your ability to manage your looks will be a significant...determiner...in terms of your success." He seems genuinely perplexed and concerned for a moment. "This shouldn't be much of a big deal, though," he continues, lightening up, "if you *are* serious about the role of course."

"I am, yes...it's a great opportunity...I am serious, *really*...but... it's just..." she looks down at her hands, fingers laced tightly together.

"Shelley," he says her name in a confiding tone and leans across the desk to close the distance between them. "I want you for this role. I think you can do it. Michelle doesn't need to drop a dress size. Her figure and...physiology...are just right, but I want *your* acting talent *inside...that...dress*," he punctuates the words by tapping his forefinger on the desk and then settles back into his chair. "Think about it over the weekend. Ok? Go on, run along now and do some thinking," he gestures the door with a wry smile, "please, you don't have to decide now."

"Ok", she says rising, "I will. Thanks, I am...thrilled". She makes for the door, turns in the doorway and repeats again, "thanks, I will. Bye."

Shelley closes the door and walks briskly down the passage. For the first time in five years she has finally achieved the normal weight for her height and frame. For the first time she can look at herself in the mirror without feeling tempted to run to the toilet. She knows how to lose weight.

Not a chance is she going to lose this role to Michelle.

Suggested ethical considerations?

## 10. Vernon

The blindfold really works. He is completely in the dark. That's the point. Not only in terms of not being able to see, but in terms of this improvisation. He has no idea what it is about.

Luke, his lecturer - the director - ushered him outside to wait while he spoke to the rest of the cast inside the studio and prepared them. Then he came out and explained to Vernon that all he had to do was enter the space blindfolded and respond organically, naturally, following his true impulses. That is all he was given. In short, nothing. Well, not *nothing*. Vernon gets it. The point.

For the last two days he has been struggling to find genuine surprise. Surprise and shock and anger and betrayal and deep humiliation all mixed into one - the final critically important moment in the play when everything is revealed and his character realises he has been played for a sucker. By his own double crossing girlfriend mind, who he loves deeply - and who it turns out has been using him (she's actually on the side of the 'thugs' he has supposedly been 'duping' all along). This much he knows. But what is going to happen in this room he has entered blindfolded, what his cast mates have been told - of this he knows nothing.

What he doesn't know is that the lights have been turned out and his cast mates are equally in the dark. What he doesn't know is that they have to find him, identify him, and once found, hang on to him until everyone is there. And then?

"Just see where it goes from there," Luke instructs, "until I turn on the light. Then step away and face him, like in the final scene."

So he bumps into one or two people and rough fumbles against his head as they try to feel for the blindfold (to see if it is him or someone else), quickly alert him to pull away. A sharp finger jammed into his eye helps too (thank goodness for the protection of the thick blindfold). He hears others bumping into each other and one or two gasps of pain or anger (they don't have blindfolds).

Someone feels his head from behind and latches on to him, grabs him around the waist - won't let go. He doesn't struggle too much, it isn't that bad and he is still uncertain as to what is up.

Then another hand reaches for his face. He instinctively pulls away and his head makes hard contact with something beside him (probably another head), he grunts and hears a simultaneous hiss of pain, air sucked through clenched teeth, (he wants to apologise).

Now this second person has him by the arm and is pulling him toward the ground - *roughly* (probably the person who he just head-butted – an angry person judging by the quality of the tugging).

A third person joins in and he stumbles over the one who has him by the waist and they all go down.

The sound alerts the remaining two cast members and they follow the sound to tumble into the melee.

Everyone is on the floor and they are pinning him down. Now he is struggling, he wants to break free. Someone is tugging at his T-shirt, it tears. The sound creates a ripple effect; a group psychosis is set in motion. Someone is tearing at his pants (trying to tear them, or tear them off?). This isn't a joke, this isn't funny.

"Ok, that enough," he shouts, "I get it!" He wants to stop. But the hands are everywhere, pinning him down, tearing at his clothes.

"Stop it," he yells now, and lashes out indiscriminately. His fist makes contact with something soft (a breast?) A grunt of pain and now the hands are relentless. '*Mother-fucker,*' he thinks in a rage, '*this is why I stopped playing rugby and took up drama instead!*' He tears off the blindfold and finds himself in darkness still. He is frantic.

Suddenly the lights come up and everyone rolls away immediately and stands facing him, the director included. Vernon is breathing heavily, flushed.

"There," says Luke appraising his altered state of being while holding up his fingers to frame him in a 'shot': "that's it!"

Suggested ethical considerations?

## 11. Fly

*The window is open and the fly flits through the gap and settles on the wall. Two men are seated at a table in deep discussion, sipping coffee and making notes as they proceed. Occasionally the fly buzzes down to settle on the rim of a coffee cup where a hand absently brushes it away - or on a face, the nose the eyes, the lips (where a hand more aggressively waves it off). For the most part it remains on the wall. It listens.*

Man#1: Where were we...Steve?

Man#2: Ah, Steve? A complete poser, always winging it.

Man#1: I've tried everything with him but he keeps hiding behind his defences. Never goes all the way.

Man#2: I think he's even worse than last term. Always trying to get away with it. I wish he would grow up.

Man#1: Good looks are worth a lot but he lacks range.

Man#2: I wish he would snap out of it. He has a lot of potential. But, yes, no range. Lazy.

Man#1: Undisciplined.

*The men pause and make little marks in little blocks on the paper. They sip coffee.*

Man#1: Sarah?

Man#2: Also hiding. Full of shit.

Man#1: Excuses, excuses. I wish she would get over herself.

Man#2: She's got issues.

Man#2: What issues?

Man#1: Fuck knows, I don't know. Stuff in the past? Hang-ups.

Man#2: Whatever they are she'd better deal with them. Right now she's as dull as ditchwater.

Man#1: Prissy is the issue I think. She needs a good pumping<sup>191</sup> to loosen up. A Christian?

Man#2: Not sure. What I do know is she's so anal I can't get anything out of her.

Man#1: Me neither. Susan?

*The fly leaves the men to their end of term marks meeting and enters more deeply into the building through a door to the passage which is standing ajar.*

Suggested ethical considerations?

## 12. Gerald

It is dark down here. But not quiet. Creaks, scratches, scuffles. Whispers like wind-blown words that cannot be separated from one another – sibilant streams, barely audible. Recognitions of his presence. Signals that the wary and imposed upon inhabitants of the darkness are watching the intruder as he feels his way, down the stairs, deeper into the darkness.

With every step the weight of the building above becomes more oppressive, bearing down on him. The air is dusty, thick and hot with the presence of the past. Gerald didn't suspect he would be coming here today when he sat eating his cornflakes for breakfast in front of the TV. He didn't want to come. He doesn't want to be here.

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<sup>191</sup> A South African slang equivalent of 'fucking'.

He takes another step, trying to penetrate the dark with blind eyes, snapping his head in the direction of every noise. The voice told him he needed to search for something here in the bowels of the building of his life. Something buried in his unconscious. Something he can carry up to the surface day of light and fresh air. Something he can transform into art. Gerald wants to be an artist. But Gerald didn't know it would mean coming here. Not now. Not today.

"We all have a secreted self," the voice told Gerald, when he sat and listened to what today's class would be about, "a self that we keep hidden away, a self that we seldom ourselves recognise is there".

Gerald listened to the voice, and the explanation led to instructions to lie down, to close his eyes, to breathe and relax, to be still. And then to come here. To open the door leading from his conscious to his unconscious and then go down the stairs. Into the darkness.

"This self is your other self," said the voice that even now is guiding him as he reaches what feels like the floor of the basement he is in. A cluttered basement, he bumps into things, something falls with a crash, broken. Glass.

'Am I barefoot'? he wonders, fearing being cut. 'No,' he decides and feels thick boots insulating his feet. In the imagination anything is possible. This is a relief and simultaneously, Gerald realises, what makes it so absolutely unsettling. What will he find? What will his 'secreted self' be like? Is it friendly? If so, why did he bury it down here, hide it away from his own eyes? Is it diseased? He does not want to be contaminated. He sees a glimmer of light and inches his way forward, hands outstretched, warding off invisible obstacles in his path.

"As artists," the voice said, "we must reclaim our hidden, unknown potentials. We must be willing to excavate the depths of our own being and release the secrets of the private, singular self for the elucidation of the many. We must confront our truth and make beauty of it."

He is coming closer to the light now. A crack. A sliver. A slit. The edge of a shuttered window? Something is there. He stops, his heart beating fast. A vague movement crossing the edge of the crack of light. Alive. A presence. His other?

"Only you will recognise your other", the voice said. "It will appear to you in a form that speaks of its nature. In a form that tells its story in image, not in words".

"Hello," Gerald whispers. Movement again. A rocking back and forth? Swaying to and fro, into the light, out of the light, into the light, out of the light. Gerald wants to see. Gerald doesn't want to see. He wants to know. He doesn't want to know. He wants to proceed, he wants to flee. What is it? Who is it? What if he isn't ready? What if he doesn't want to share this with the world? What if, for now, he wants to leave, go back up to the world and slip back into the unknowing forgetfulness of ignorance and avoidance of his 'other', his 'secreted self'?

What if his other self is not ready? It did not ask him to come. Today. After cornflakes for breakfast. The voice told he must come and claim, and expose for the sake of art. To gather up his secret self to use as resource material for the piece he and his classmates will make for the end of term exam.

The presence is still swaying, to and fro, into the light, out of the light, into the light, out of the light.

Gerald wants to be an artist. Does he have to decide today? Right now?

The cornflakes are sitting uncomfortably. He feels mildly sick.

Suggested ethical considerations?

**13. Christoff**

Dear Professor Sorenson,

I am writing to you once again to express concern over my daughter Sylvie, who is currently a second year in your department. You may recall I contacted you last August after the mid-year break and you kindly referred me to Mr. Van Wyk her year group supervisor and acting teacher? At such time I expressed concerns regarding significant changes my wife and I had noticed in Sylvie's demeanour, character and behaviour after her return home after her first and second quarter as a first year student. Mr van Wyk assured me that Sylvie was in his view doing fine. Her grades were good, she was attentive and responsive in class and had been achieving well in productions and practical assignments. Moreover, he suggested that she had acculturated and acclimatised to the context of drama very well and had many friends – in short she seemed at such time to be, in his view, very socially well adapted and adjusted. Perhaps this has something to do with the growing concerns my wife and I have been experiencing?

Please understand we do not see her in this new culture and environment but only have recourse to her behaviour when she returns home. She has, in her relationship with us, become increasingly withdrawn and remote. She seems highly critical, and disdainful even, of our attempts to connect with her in any way. In short, she seems to have taken up a position in which we are in some ways her enemy or inferior to her in our views of life. Previously we enjoyed a very open relationship with her. She no longer joins us when we go out to meet with friends and stays for long periods of time shut away in her room sms'ing her new university friends or simply vegetating in front of the TV. The type of content she is watching is disconcerting, and my wife and I have tried banning her from TV but she becomes aggressive when confronted in any way. As a trained psychologist my wife seems to think she is suffering from some sort of depression, however when she has tried to probe Sylvie about her state of being she is met with resistance, anger and cynicism.

We believe Sylvie has started drinking (possibly heavily) because the liquor in our liquor cabinet is significantly diminished after her visits but we have not caught her in the act. She denies using alcohol, yet we have had accounts from acquaintances whose children attend the same university that Sylvie is nothing short of a 'party animal' and there are intimations that it is not just drinking, but also smoking and possibly drugs also, as well as extremely liberal sexual behaviour. We are not averse to drinking in moderation, and now that Sylvie has come of age we believe that she should be able to make her own choices. It is her vehement denial that troubles us. We are well aware that the culture of performance is one which seems to foster or attract poor lifestyle choices and are concerned that our daughter, who was always a model child and always healthy and happy has perhaps fallen into a 'bad crowd' or is being influenced negatively in some way.

Please understand that we are not seeking to place blame on the department or the university in any way, as concerned parents we are desperately trying to address what seems a 'turn for the worse' in the choices our child is making and the impact this appears to be having on her moral character and mental and emotional health. As you are the specialists in the field of performance we would greatly appreciate your insights or opinions, as well as suggestions and recommendations, as to how we might be able to manage this situation. Are there support groups or specialists we can approach who understand what Sylvie and ourselves might be going through? Many friends have suggested it is just a 'teenage rebellion' and this obviously has some degree of merit. However, we are not

comfortable with simply leaving it at that and allowing things to, as some suggest, 'run their course'.

As a psychologist my wife is well versed in how quickly negative behaviours can erode a person's moral fibre and character and downward spirals are difficult to stop. In my view, university should be a place that produces well-rounded graduates of strong moral character that can become the future leaders of our society. We would dearly like to intervene before Sylvie does herself or others harm. The 'bright' child we sent to university and the 'dark' adolescent who has been returned to us are completely different people. Where is my daughter?

Your support would be greatly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely,  
Christoff Berger

Suggested ethical considerations?

#### 14. Danni

At first it was just fun and everyone else - who was *anyone* else - was doing it.

Danni found the expansion of freedom - from the strict confines of school, its constrictive uniform and many rules, to university drama where you could dress how you wanted (the crazier the better) smoke in front of lecturers or even sometimes go out drinking with them (at cast parties and such), say what you wanted, when you wanted (swear and blaspheme like a trooper if the urge took you – *fucking-A yeah!*) - to be a complete revolution and *liberation*. *Viva la difference!* Oh yes, and lots of pot. Studying drama was hectic and challenging and risky and exciting. The pot helped take the edge off *and* it also blew her mind open and made her *sooo* creative. Her poetry was *sooo* deep. The pictures she started drawing were *sooo* vivid. And of course pot turned sex into a magnificent and glorious odyssey devoid of all that painful and embarrassing fumbling (it just seemed so...*organic?*). And of course yes, lots of alcohol too.

Danni was nobody at school. She followed the rules to stay out of trouble. But now? Now she was a deviant. Now she was a social outsider - and an insider of the culture of her theatre friends. And she was the 'in' epitome of the 'in thing'. Who would ever have believed it? Oh, how she would have loved to rub this in head girl of her school's face. The world was bright and her future was a dream of success and recognition and being paid back for being the dowdy nothing – teased, ridiculed, overlooked, ignored - she once was. She had grown into her lanky frame and her breasts had finally *arrived* (the way the boys watched her now said it all). And she wanted to show them off. She wasn't scared of any role on offer - nudity, sex, swearing...whatever. She would do anything to get the lead. This was her edge over the next girl who might be too soft and prim to take the necessary plunge. She would out-compete them with her fearlessness, her brazen defiance. It was *her* body and *her* life and she was going to use every asset at her disposal to get what she needed now, no more second fiddle for her.

When she arrived on the university scene she exploded like a seed that had been waiting dormant in the dry and parched desert of normality and insignificance for the seasonal rain. No questioning. No quandaries. As far as she was concerned every lecturer



and director was a 'Simon,' and she realised that to be the best was easy...just do whatever 'Simon' says. Such a simple formula for success. Just don't ask questions. Just don't care. Just forget about 'Danni from school'. Now her life had become simple: 'all about me'. She deserved it. The lecturers told her to define herself, distinguish herself, ensure she had a strong and definite personality to offer that was unique and appealing. She went for it with the passion perhaps only other artists can truly understand - relentless, fervent, total.

At first it was just fun and everyone else - who was *anyone* else - was doing it. The problem was, like a desert flower, the bloom was spectacular...and short lived.

When she entered the industry, she found that although the competition at university was fierce and she had to work to become recognised, she wasn't even vaguely prepared for how big the ocean really was. She left university feeling like she had the goods and then found that even her brazen fearlessness was outclassed by many, many more people more desperate than she was. The pot and alcohol helped her come down after performances (when she had work) and deal with the boredom between jobs at first, but soon she found that she couldn't face castings without something to 'soften the edges' or lubricate the ongoing long term rawness of the exposure to certain issues the characters she played had to deal with.

In the beginning she was obsessed with her looks and making sure she looked awesome, all the time, even when she went shopping. But now it was becoming harder to keep up. Keeping up required money (work on her teeth, tan, make-up, gym, dance classes) but when work was thin she fell back on bad habits to deal with the stress and boredom and this messed with her teeth, skin and figure. It was a vicious and deadly catch twenty two. She needed easy money. She loved getting commercials, they were brain-and-spirit-numbing, but they were a 'quick fix' cash wise. If only she had the discipline to save. But the joy of a temporarily overflowing bank account and the temptation of hanging out with her friends and keeping up with their stylish and fast-paced (and often expensive) lives meant these times of plenty were generally orgies of spending and 'pampering' herself as reward for her struggles. She was in a vicious cycle of being 'in-on-the-scene' and feeling on top of the world when she was working and earning, and then retreating into solitude and degradation during the dry spells. She knew it. She didn't know what to do about it. She didn't want to let any of her friends know she wasn't actually coping. She didn't want to be seen as weak or unsuccessful. She always spoke about her work as if her life was awesome and exaggerated everything to make it seem bigger than 'real' (ordinary life), better than the life boring 'Danni-from school' would have had. But she was lonely and alone. Her friends were not a support but her competition in castings and for work. When she had work she was coping. But when she didn't, she was terrified of becoming 'Danni from school' again - insignificant, meaningless, a nobody. She needed easy money.

Commercials were great but they weren't easy to get. So much sitting around with all those pasty-faced twenty something wannabe's. She was moving up now, getting older. She wanted more. And her drive was not what it once was. Going to casting after casting and facing the humiliation and the rejection - she was sick of it. She preferred to smoke pot and chill. But chilling was chilling only so long as the high lasted - which was becoming increasingly shorter. Some of her friends, especially the models, were into harder stuff and she had been contemplating trying some. They said coke would help her deal with the tedium of the castings and also revive her aggressive edge so that she could make sure she got some roles, hopefully movies. She was thinking of giving it a try. And then there was also stripping and porn for temporary cash flow, *just* until she got well established. The work would be more consistent and she could get her discipline back. Get out of the flat more. Get her groove back.

There were times she wondered if 'Danni from school' would approve, what she would say. She wondered if the character she had created to distinguish herself in the industry, as her lecturers had suggested, was actually a good character. A good person? Was 'Danni from school' a 'good' person? 'Danni from school' was obedient, sure, but was she 'good' – was she capable of making 'good' choices? Didn't 'Danni from school' choose to study drama in the first place? Wasn't all this 'Danni from school's' fault? Wasn't it 'Danni from school' who had first opened her legs, taken a sip, had a good pull on the joint? Sometimes she wondered if that *had* been 'Danni from School' or this other character that had now possessed her. Where was 'Danni from school' now? Dead? Buried. Anaesthetised? But wondering was too difficult to face, too painful. So she would inevitably do what was becoming easier and easier to do to forget - she would 'open her legs', 'reach for the bottle' or 'roll a big fat one'. She sometimes wanted to pray that she wouldn't wake up when the intoxicants finally overwhelmed her system. But the problem was, unlike 'Danni from school' who said her prayers to a kind and understanding and powerful God, she no longer knew who to pray to. The character she was now playing did not believe in God, did not believe in anything except herself. And she had nothing to offer. She was broken and weak. She had sold her power for the promise of significance, and in doing so she had stranded herself on an island so small she could hardly breathe.

At first it was just fun and everyone else - who was *anyone* else - was doing it. And she had been the best at it. Now she wondered if she was the only one from her university year group *still* doing it - and how she could stop doing it. Before it killed her.

Suggested ethical considerations?

## 15. Paul

Some say that acting *isn't* real and that you have to 'create the character'. Some say that it *is* real and you simply have to find ways to 'be yourself' - find real emotions in yourself, use your 'self' as raw material. Every single one of Paul's teachers seems to have a different definition and understanding of what acting is – and perhaps more importantly then, what the 'self' is. It took some time to become clear to Paul, but slowly he began to realise that from one class to the next he was being asked not only to approach performance from completely different points of view (and it was becoming confusing), but to hold completely different views of himself and therefore of reality (and he was beginning to experience existential overwhelm).

Paul wanted desperately to know himself. So many teachers and students had told him how excellent acting is as a means to come to know 'the true self'. Not that he was aware of this being a reason for studying drama and theatre, he enjoyed being on stage and was good at it. But he is now beginning to 'fray at the edges' and this is casting a shadow on his enjoyment of performance. He is more confused now about himself, about what the human being is, than before he came to university. He also can no longer separate himself from his characters. When he was at school he didn't really find this to be a problem. But now, when he finds something real to put into a character, then it feels like it is a part of him. And when he pretends something he didn't initially feel was true enough times through rehearsal and performance, it eventually feels like it becomes real too, and also a part of him. He is beginning to feel like a tapestry, a mix and match, a hodge-podge of different voices all clamouring for his attention. He feels like he has all these bits and pieces grafted

on to him, like a modified tree that can grow both apples and pears (and oranges and peaches, and plums and bananas...). He is struggling to make choices because there are so many voices to account for. Each character has a life, speaks to him. Some cajole him into doing things he feels are not right. Others oppose them vehemently. He does not know on what basis to choose. Which is right? Which is wrong? *'Who am I in all this?'* Paul begins to wonder, *'where is the centre in all this?'*, *'I am unravelling'*.

And he is afraid of saying anything because he doesn't want to come across as weak, as being incapable of 'handling it'. This is what acting is all about, being able to 'handle it'. The playing is just the surface. The strength to 'keep your self together'...*that* is the real talent. Isn't it? Not that anyone says so. Not directly. He just knows. Because questioning is out of the question. Struggling with existential crises is like admitting you don't have any talent. He is observant. He watches. He sees how lecturers respond to any signs of 'not coping'. But Paul is not coping. Yet his ability to pretend, what gave him the confidence to study drama in the first place, has given him the ability to cover up his confusion and doubt. To shut it away. From everyone. Except himself. Paul feels like he is shattering into a million pieces and he does not know how to put himself back together again. Are his lecturers shattered also? Do they not explain it to him, or refuse to enter this territory of existential fragmentation, because they too have not the foggiest clue about how to put *themselves* back together? His studies are breaking him. Are they broken too? Pretending that this is normal and that everything is ok? But everything is not ok. Paul is dissolving. Paul is disappearing.

Will something magically coalesce out of the mix? Is that it? Like waking up enlightened one day by sheer fluke or accident? Is that it? A grace bestowed by mere chance? Or should he be doing something about it? Should he get out now while he can and try to find a way to fix himself? Should he be taking some control, taking measures to hold himself together? What measures? And who has the answers? And is he even allowed to ask? Can he ask without jeopardising his image of being in control? Of being able to 'handle it'? So many questions that are going unanswered. So much pretending that there *are no questions*. Round and round on the widening gyre go the unanswered questions in Paul's mind, and he has no centre to hold them to.

Suggested ethical considerations?

## 16. Cindy

Dear Jeremy,

It has been a long time, I know. Over ten years ago since I cast you as Caleb in *'Scapegoat'*. You have been on my mind a lot recently. I had a little boy about 6 months ago, I am not sure if you heard? Quite an adjustment for me as I am sure you can appreciate. What? 'Unorthodox', 'fringe' Cindy a mom? Yes, it's true.

When I fell pregnant I considered an abortion. I was pro-choice and being a mother had never been high on my agenda. Falling pregnant was an 'accident'. But I couldn't do it. Maybe the hormones? It affects some people that way. Anyway, for whatever reason it was the best decision I ever made. Alex, my little boy, is a wonder. He has brought so much healing light and love to my life and enriched me in ways I never thought possible. He has made me question who I am and what I hold most dear. He has brought about an awakening

of conscience I think. And that's why I am writing to you now and to a whole lot of other past students and actors I have worked with. People I feel my choices in the past may have affected negatively. I am writing to say sorry.

In '*Scapegoat*', I asked things of you without taking you into account. That scene where you had to go naked, in the cold? And also all the scenes of your 'vendetta' where you brutalised the Leroy's? The dark places in the human mind and soul I asked you to uncover? *Pushed* you to uncover. Sometimes ruthlessly and unfeelingly. And then when you went home afterwards? I never even asked what you might have experienced, what all that did to you, the impact that might have had on your life. I was too busy trying to make an actor of you and a success of myself. As a writer and director. As a teacher.

When I look down at little Alex's face, and I see his smile...I must be honest...a part of me is haunted. I think of Alex in your place twenty years from now. I think of an avant-garde and contentious director and scriptwriter asking him to do the things I asked you to do. To enter the labyrinths of the human condition I asked you to enter without guidance or so much as a second thought about what that might turn you into. How it might have changed you. I shudder even thinking about it.

Alex has asked me (through his mere presence) to question things I never questioned before. What is this thing we inflict on one another? This thing called performance? Why do we do this thing? Is it worth it? Does it really make a difference? And if so, why do we flounder around in all the negative stuff? Why don't we make things that uplift and inspire and remind us of the beauty of life, the good in life? Is it necessary? Big questions for me. Important questions I had asked before, but always answered from the point of view of the paradigm I was in...without breaking free of it. Incapable of seeing differently until Alex came along and changed me, liberated my eyes – freed my heart. I can now see that a part of me was angry with life and the world and my art was an expression of anger. But is this healthy and useful? I no longer think so. I believe I used you in fulfilling an agenda that was my own but also a part of a bigger picture that was in turn using me. A world where art has become steeped in the shadow and has lost sight of the light. I too played some dangerous roles when I was a student and young professional. I too entered the abyss and I don't think I would ever have managed to pull myself out of it without Alex's help (listen to me, writing as if he has a voice and can speak and he is not even crawling properly yet – but he does speak, a language I forgot how to understand a long time ago and am only now remembering).

I hope you 'survived'. I hope I did not hurl you into the abyss and close your heart like mine had closed. If I did, or at least played a part in doing so...I am so sorry. It may be no consolation to you (and I don't expect it to be) but my entire approach to teaching and creating has changed. I wish I could begin with you all over again. But this is not possible. Forgive me. I was lost. I was estranged from myself and life itself. What I did to you and others was my attempt to find my way back home to wholeness. I see this now but was incapable of doing so then. Fish cannot see the water.

I don't expect your forgiveness, and you may even take this letter as an affront. It is not meant to be. I suppose in a certain sense I am being selfish all over again, by writing to you, now just expressing the opposite point of view. If this makes you angry, that's alright and I would understand if this is so. I am being selfish I suppose. If we can't change what we believe then why believe in anything? But for me right now it does matter what we believe in and that we have a choice as to what that is, and that we can escape beliefs about ourselves and art that hurt and harm rather than elevating and inspiring.

As I say, I think of you and wonder how you are. I hope you are healthy and happy and wish you all the best.

Cindy (the mom).

Suggested ethical considerations?

## 17. Preston

'Fuck this, who do you think you are?' Susan is livid. Her face is bright red and her bush of wiry brown hair is standing out from the side of her head like she is amped up on static electricity. The class were sitting listening to Camille's monologue when Preston knocked and walked in to the room, five minutes late because his movement class was outdoors today and ran overtime. He is out of breath and sweating, having run all the way back from the park to the department in the sweltering February heat.

"Sorry I'm late," Preston says confidently, refusing to be shaken, standing his ground. He is well-versed in Susan's 'educational techniques', or as he describes them '*antics*'. To his third year acting teacher Susan, everything is high drama. Life is drama. Her whole life is dramatic. Divorce, affairs. Trying to quit smoking. Her dog dying. Everything. The slightest tremor and she registers 10 on the Richter scale. Mostly. But also, weirdly, sometimes serious things happen to her and she doesn't flinch. Like being mugged last month and then telling the story as if she was describing a Zen Tea Ceremony. And there are no boundaries. Foul and abusive language, with students, with the other staff members. Everything is amped up – like her hair. She can act. Seriously. No doubt about it. The woman can act. But it is *all* an act. The woman is a genius. But she spills every which way - an untethered thundercloud or deliverer of rainbows and pots of gold (depending on her mood, which, Preston takes it, is on the stormy side of the watershed today).

"Don't apologise to *me* you fool," says Susan exasperated, rolling her eyes and raising one hand to the heavens (while turning by a quarter to give the rest of the class a good sight line in a '*you are a complete idiot*' fashion), "apologise to Camille! She was busy with her piece and you interrupted her. An artist at work."

"Sorry Camille," Preston says genuinely. Camille closes her mouth which has been open all the while and doesn't reply.

"Good," says Susan walking to open the door again. "Now get out."

Preston considers her squarely and says, "Actually, if Camille doesn't mind, I would like to stay and listen to her monologue."

"No. You will get out and go and think about what you have done and why you should be at class on time and why you have no respect for art," Susan glowers.

Ignoring the spittle shower her tirade has scattered all over his face, Preston doesn't flinch. "I am paying your salary. I think I will stay and listen to the rest of the class if *they* don't mind?" He looks to the others for affirmation or consent. Nobody stirs. Then turning back to Susan he continues with "...and then I will deliver my monologue and you will critique it."

Susan is about to explode. For a moment Preston thinks she will physically strike him. He steels himself. Instead she tries to push him toward the door. He refuses to budge. He is a big boy. A big boy who has had enough of her crap. She splutters, trying to find something to say and then storms back to her chair and gestures Camille to 'pick it up'. Preston closes the door and takes a seat. The rest of the class look like a bunch of pugs – eyeballs almost popping out of the heads. Susan won't look at Preston. Preston won't look at Susan. He

doubts he will ever have another class with her again. If she doesn't ask to have him shipped off to another group then he will make the request again. So far he hasn't had much luck. Every time he raises the issue with the head of department he is told that this is Susan's style and that her bark is worse than her bite etc. But he has had enough of the 'drama' of learning drama and now simply wants to get on with the job.

Suggested ethical considerations?

## 7.2 Suggested ethical considerations and territories

The table to follow inventories the themes, ethical concerns or considerations I identified through narrative analysis of the material generated by my ethical self enquiry process (Trawling Phase 1). To recall, this included explorations of memory (*recapitulation*), journaling (*Ethics Evolution Journal*), self-interview (*Personal Ethics Questionnaire*) and narrative (*Narrative of Personal Ethics*). The particular form and articulation of the concerns presented here is the result of conducting a narrative review of the fictional *Parables* once they had been completed. I distilled the considerations further to reach what I would define as three overriding 'territories': 1. Inclusion versus Exclusion, 2. Illusion versus Reality and 3. Art versus Education. The table includes reference to the respective *Parables* in which each theme or concern is embedded or realised.

Collectively the practices listed above that I engaged in my process of ethical self enquiry (Trawling Phase 1) and my description of, and reflection on them in the preceding 5 chapters, makes direct answer to my first and fourth research aims<sup>192</sup>, and the table below could be seen as the definitive answer to my guiding research question<sup>193</sup>.

With regard to sharing the outcomes of a process of ethical self enquiry my recommendation resides with translating concerns artistically and offering them in an *embedded* form (that is, contained within *fictionalised narratives* or other artistic mediums or forms of expression) in order to afford others the chance to engage with them on their own terms, and without overtly prescribing 'right' and 'wrong'. As stated in the previous chapter it is anticipated that this depersonalisation might create a 'buffer' that will defuse tensions or frictions resulting from divergent value positions amongst educators and effectively 'equal the playing field'. In this tabulated form the ethical considerations lack context; they are devoid of the nuances, subtleties and complexities of 'lived' experience and are very to the point or even 'blunt'. Presenting ethical concerns in such a manner may be offensive to others and may equally be extremely exposing for the person who shares them. This may cause friction and detract from getting to the real business at hand, and in a spirit of shared endeavour and convivial dialogue.

<sup>192</sup> To review, see Chapter 1, section 1.5.5.

<sup>193</sup> To review, see Chapter 1, section 1.5.4.



I emphasise ‘suggested’ because these considerations are indicative of my personal ethos and while I may see them as relevant, others may not agree. The suggested ethical considerations arise from my direct and indirect personal experience and as such do not necessarily speak to all contexts (institutions, organisations, groups) or parties (individuals, groups) within the greater habitus of performance and its education. However, throughout this *Performed Narrative* I argue for the legitimacy and credibility of subjective knowledge, and in this sense the table is offered as a contribution to existing research regarding ethical concerns and considerations in drama, theatre and performance education.

A number of the considerations have been ‘unpacked’ in greater detail as this *Performed Narrative* has unfolded; specifically in contexts where they have supported reflections on a process of ethical self enquiry. A great deal of time could and should be spent deconstructing each issue and Seton (2004, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010) in particular has undeniably done ground-breaking work in this regard<sup>194</sup>. Such examination and analysis exceeds the particular scope of this study. However, in order to demonstrate the utility and relevance of a process of ethical self enquiry as a means to identifying ethical concerns, a brief overview of the ‘territories’ is considered beneficial. This should also grant insight into my personal ethos and assist with revealing the basis upon which various considerations were identified.

‘Inclusion versus Exclusion’ covers ethical considerations in which discrimination and intolerance might occur owing to the particular nature of the organisational habitus or social imaginary of the (counter) culture of performance and its education. This also speaks to compartmentalisation of roles and a failure to entreat with individuals as ‘whole persons’. Ethical concerns in this instance may indicate a compromising of the ethical values of: unity, freedom, autonomy, human rights, equality, tolerance, empathy, fairness, mutual respect, caring, justice and so forth.

‘Reality versus Illusion’ describes concerns that have to do with observing the difference between the ‘daily’ (ordinary reality) and ‘extra-daily’ (constructed or imaginary contexts and altered states of consciousness). These concerns have to do with safely navigating transitions in and out of these contexts and being sensitive to, and dealing responsibly with, existential and ontological repercussions. They also have to do with expectations that students (performers) make use of personal material (historical trauma and embodied experience) and evidence a willing vulnerability in order to validate their competence. Ethical concerns associated with this ‘territory’ may indicate a compromising of the ethical values of: trust, safety, caring, empathy, accountability and responsibility. This ‘territory’ might also be described as ‘Acting versus Reality’.

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<sup>194</sup> To recall, in the discussion of morphic field theory in Chapter 4 I touched on the fact that almost all of the concerns I personally identified in the South African context are mirrored or referenced in some form in the research conducted by Seton in Australia and the U.K.



‘Art versus Education’ deals with ethical concerns that have to do with a perceived need to differentiate clearly between licenses the culture of performance and the arts in general may offer personally and socially, but which might diverge from limits applicable to education (and by extension its responsibility to stakeholders such as students, parents, institutions, government and society). Ethical values such as trust, loyalty, accountability, responsibility and duty may be at stake here.

Finally, some concerns may appear to be very similar or ‘repeat’ across different ‘territories’: for example, considerations 8 and 46; and 3-7 and 35. This can be attributed to the fact that these ‘territories’ are not distinct in the strictest sense and their boundaries are thus porous. In keeping with a situationist approach to ethics the parameters described by each territory sheds contrasting light on, or highlights different features of each ethical consideration.

### 7.2.1 Table of *Suggested* Ethical Considerations

Suggested ethical consideration	Source narrative
<b>Inclusion versus Exclusion</b>	
1. a broad-based intolerance on the part of lecturers and student peers (also industry) toward conservatism or inhibition of almost any kind;	Lauren, Danni, Paul
2. unclear distinctions and ethical codes delineating the tensions between ‘liberation’ (targeting and removing personal inhibitions and ‘blocks’) and ‘education’ - (‘liberation’ versus ‘violation’?);	Lauren
3. the possibility that the pressures and demands (deadlines and resources) of the educational context might in fact exacerbate certain discriminations and foster negative stereotyping;	Lauren
4. favouritism (inclusion and acceptance) on the part of lecturers and student peers (also industry) toward those who integrate into the ‘counter-culture’ of the performance education habitus, and discrimination (exclusion and rejection) of those who don’t;	Lauren, Charlie
5. direct and indirect coercive strategies (such as ‘industry threat’) aimed at fostering cultural conformity or compliance with certain practices/expectations without respecting or accounting for personal orientations and existential security (conscience, religious belief or value systems, cultural orientations, sexual orientations and psychological make-up);	Lauren, Charlie, Paul
6. lack of clearly articulated departmental ‘ethos’ - including a lack of transparent and clearly articulated course and culture expectations with regard to conscience, religious belief or value systems, cultural orientations, sexual orientations and psychological make-up;	Lauren, Jake, Paul
7. lack of guidance or empathy regarding the challenges involved in making a transition from the culture of origin into a new culture, whether this is consciously or unconsciously expected and/or required;	Lauren
8. creating a ‘cultic’ orientation in studio, rehearsal and	Jake

educational processes;	
9. enforced (expected) conformance to anti-oppressive pedagogies and liberal views becoming a form of oppression in its own right;	Lauren
10. 'lumping' students into groups and critiquing the group versus providing individual feedback;	Trevor
11. the potential for the counter-cultural (non-conformist - non-socially, politically, spiritually aligned) orientations of performance and its education causing/resulting in a loss/corruption of moral/ethical character and thus compromising the capacity to make clear and effective personal life choices (lack of relation to a higher purpose or higher organising principle that transcends the purview of the limited ego-bound self);	Lauren, Christoff, Paul, Danni
<b>Reality versus Illusion</b>	
12. lack of clearly articulated understandings regarding the nature of ideas such as 'possession' used to explain deep character generation/embodiment;	Lauren
13. expectations that students make themselves available to energetic, spiritual, emotional, psychic 'possession' (total surrender of the self);	Lauren
14. lack of briefing (information) regarding the potential for experiencing altered states of consciousness;	Lauren, Stacey
15. the use of practices designed to liberate emotions in ways that may be unsafe in themselves and/or lack necessary and clearly defined (and rigorously adhered to) safeguards;	Trevor
16. a lack of psychological training for educators who facilitate practices that access or liberate deeply embedded or unconscious emotional material/resources;	Trevor, Gerald, Cindy
17. a lack of understanding of the neuro-biological and neuropsychological processes of altering emotions and the impact/effect/affect that the altering of emotional states has on the homeostasis (chemical, mental, physiological balances) of the whole person and/or on the existential sense of self or identity;	Trevor, Jenny, Cindy
18. a lack of clear articulation (briefing) of the anatomy of emotions and the mechanisms whereby emotions might be accessed, understood and therefore integrated on a personal and group level <i>after</i> significant changes in states of being have been stimulated;	Trevor, Jenny, Cindy
19. a lack of debriefing after emotionally and psychologically loaded/affective experiences;	Trevor, Jenni
20. a lack of training for educators in appropriate and effective debriefing techniques and practices;	Trevor, Jenni
21. using the personality (ego identity) of students as a point of critique (versus speaking to the technique) or as a mechanism to stimulate emotional discharge/access;	Trevor, Mark, Fly
22. lack of understanding and or training in how to manage the impacts of, or control deliberately sought after, or accidentally caused, metaphysical experiences - such as out-of-the-body experiences, temporal dissociation (loss of, speeding up of, or slowing down of time) and states of heightened sexual arousal;	Stacey, Conrad
23. lack of debriefing of metaphysical experiences that might dramatically alter the existential health or worldview of students;	Stacey
24. selection of scripts and productions that require students to	Jenny, Shelley, Vernon,

portray characters and events that may exceed their emotional and psychological maturity;	Cindy
25. a lack of questioning and re-considering how the culture of performance may lead to or support the perpetuation and exacerbation of destructive defensive strategies (addictions such as the use of alcohol, nicotine, street and pharmaceutical drugs and sex - and disorders such as bulimia/anorexia) to offset feelings of shame and degradation;	Jenny, Shelley, Danni, Paul
26. lack of promoting/developing healthy alternatives for processing, discharging and/or integrating existential impacts of characterisation and managing the impacts that the challenges of performance place on personal and social life;	Jenny, Shelley, Danni
27. lack of appropriate debriefing and monitoring of long term impacts on the psychological and emotional well-being of students (and professionals) expected to portray explicit sexual material, violence and degrading stereotypes;	Jenny; Danni, Cindy
28. lack of questioning and confronting the destructive or 'dark side' of the performance industry and adequately preparing students to manage/cope under negative moral pressures to conform to lifestyle choices that may lead to impaired health and dysfunction in the long term;	Jenny, Danni
29. expectations that students (professionals) change their physiology (looks, weight, build) in order to comply with character/role expectations and/or industry expectations;	Shelley, Danni
30. emphasis on industry expectations that may compromise physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual health and well-being (pandering to industry norms versus changing them);	Shelley, Danni
31. the use of personal material (including life history) in studio and rehearsals or for the workshopping or creation of characters and/in productions;	Gerald
32. lack of preparation or adequate briefing prior to exploring practices, exercises or tasks that may put students at risk (vaguely or poorly articulated expectations and outcomes for practices, exercises and tasks);	Trevor, Vernon, Gerald
33. lack of consideration for the impacts on personal moral character resulting from expected suppression of moral emotions and natural responses to stimuli (practices, exercises, tasks, improvisations, course content and/or themes in plays/productions);	Danni, Paul
34. cultural emphasis on and attitude of 'non-questioning' of practices and an expected servility to the dictates of the industry, director, choreographer, script, or educator (lack of attention to how suppressed feelings might create identity loss/fragmentation and moral/ethical vulnerability);	Danni, Paul
<b>Art versus Education</b>	
35. lack of understanding of and empathy for the individual student; a lack of taking the 'whole' person into account;	Lauren, Trevor, Shelley, Fly, Cindy, Preston
36. lack of appropriate mechanisms for, and sensitivity to, voicing grievances (fears, doubts, struggles);	Lauren, Danni, Paul, Preston
37. lack of background, empathy or due consideration (focus and time allocation) on the part of educators regarding students' personal moral, emotional and psychological struggles and issues (including his or her belief and value system, cultural orientations, psychological make-up and life history);	Lauren, Jake, Conrad, Shelley, Fly, Danni, Cindy, Preston
38. lack of understanding of the impact of discrimination and stereotyping on grades and self-esteem;	Lauren

39. educators (full-time or part-time) being hired for their discipline specific qualifications without being qualified educators;	Jake
40. a lack of appropriate education for performance educators in the pedagogy of performance education itself;	Jake
41. hiring educators without accounting for or rigorously identifying the personal ethical orientations of educators prior to being contracted;	Jake
42. educators being hired without being versed in ethics or being given pre-service training regarding ethics in general and/or the specific code of conduct of a department;	Jake
43. educators (junior and or part time) functioning without mentorship or being monitored by more senior or experienced staff regarding educational pedagogy and ethics;	Jake
44. lack of cohesion or communication between educators teaching different groups within a year group, or different modules within a specialisation (such as acting, movement etc.);	Jake, Paul
45. educators engaging in unequal power relationships with their students and taking a top-down approach to education (possessors versus facilitators of knowledge/learning) rather than being partners with their students in the educational process;	Jake
46. educators behaving as 'guru's' versus 'facilitators of learning';	Jake
47. educators using the classroom or studio as a performance space in which to gratify and pamper their own egos (this may be especially problematic if educators are established artists in the field and have a reputation that students may be 'dazzled' by);	Jake, Preston
48. boundary blurring between the cultures of performance and education (heightening or 'dramatising' of all aspects of the performance educational context);	Jake, Preston
49. boundary blurring regarding the use of sexual energy and discourse in performance and its training;	Jake
50. inappropriate and unprofessional use of language in general (in class, rehearsals, grading, industry and in public);	Jake, Mark, Fly, Preston
51. educators becoming overly familiar with students due to the intimate nature of studio practices;	Jake
52. educators engaging in inappropriate socialising with students after hours;	Jake
53. a lack of clearly articulated codes of conduct regarding appropriate sexual boundaries between students and staff;	Jake
54. acceptance (condoning through inaction) in the culture of performance and its education of unethical or contentious behaviour;	Lauren, Jake
55. a lack of encouragement of virtuous behaviour and appropriate mechanisms and processes to facilitate monitoring of staff and student behaviour;	Jake
56. dealing with students' psychological and emotional blockages in disparaging ways or avoiding them entirely;	Jake, Fly
57. excessive or inappropriate fostering of competition between students to drive results and the exhibition of vulnerability;	Trevor, Shelley, Danni
58. expectations that the context of performance education function according to the same rules as industry;	Charlie
59. expectations and pressures placed on students regarding course or curricular commitments (working long practical hours coupled with academic work-load, working late at night and on weekends/holidays) that negatively impact their social integration and the leading of a 'normal' student life (and thus	Charlie

potential impacts on natural personal and social maturation and development);	
60. commodification of talent versus respect for the performer as a whole person;	Mark, Fly
61. a lack of due consideration for the difference between the educator's level of experience and that of the student (expecting too much too soon without paying attention to the growth curve and 'gap' or divide between ignorance and proficiency);	Conrad
62. lack of clearly articulated codes of conduct regarding the use of touch between lecturers, students and peers in the studio and in rehearsal;	Conrad
63. the use of comparison (between students) as a means of critique or assessment;	Shelley, Trevor
64. educators placing their artistic vision above the well-being/stability of students;	Shelley, Cindy, Preston
65. use of deceptive strategies in improvisations, studio work or rehearsals to achieve results via indirect means (lack of transparency);	Vernon
66. lack of safeguards (clearly articulated boundaries or parameters) with regard to giving freedom of creative expression in improvisations, studio work or rehearsals;	Vernon
67. lack of general communication between parents (guardians) and educators;	Christoff
68. lack of appropriate mechanisms for including parents (guardians) as partners in the educational process - through feedback, forum, discussion (parents may play a vital role in monitoring and supporting students who may struggle with cultural and practical transformations and existential shifts resulting from the challenges of performance education);	Christoff
69. indirectly or directly cultivating narcissistic tendencies;	Danni
70. lack of clearly articulated understandings of, or education regarding, identity and the self;	Paul
71. lack of shared and clearly articulated discourse between lecturers (across specialisations such as acting, movement, voice) regarding key concepts, practices and terminology.	Paul, Jake

## CHAPTER EIGHT: ‘Literary dialogue’ as an ‘ethical encounter’ within ethical self enquiry – reflections on Trawling Phase 2

This chapter is dedicated to reviewing the second phase of research where I began the process of reflecting on my ethical self enquiry process (Trawling Phase 1). Here I turned to literature in order to understand and make sense of my explorations and appraise the various practices I had drawn on and in some instances devised. My emphasis was not on seeking support for the suggested ethical considerations I had identified en route but rather on trying to determine the utility and relevance of the practices I had used to reach them. While I have already shared many of the fruits of this second research phase in the course of reflecting on each of the respective practices I implemented in previous chapters, the emphasis here will reside with reflecting on this phase itself.

I experienced this phase of research as a form of ethical education or ‘literary dialogue’ with practitioners, commentators and critics from a broad spectrum of fields and disciplines. These were in some instances related to performance, its education and ethics and in others completely unrelated, but each offered important and necessary insight into the practices I had explored. The ethical self enquiry process I had by this point completed had equipped me with a stronger or more consciously rarefied sense of my personal ethos than I had previously possessed. As such I felt suitably prepared and capable now of weighing my views against, or dialoguing with, alternative positions without fearing being subsumed by them. Such preparation however, did not mean this process unfolded without perturbation. And while I use the term ‘dialogue’, I still distinctly frame this within the parameters of self-motivated enquiry; it did not involve communication with peers within my own habitus. Rather this ‘dialogue’ was between myself and concepts, ideas, philosophies, metaphors, and scientific theories that shed light on ethics in general, its relation to performance and its education, and ethical self enquiry in particular.

### 8.1 The power of metaphor: ethical self enquiry as *The Moral Artist’s Way*<sup>195</sup>

I bedded my research approach on the intuitive supposition that educators have at their disposal a wealth of *resources*, including ‘tacit’ knowledge regarding ethics in the form of lived/embodied experience which might be systematically extracted and raised to consciousness<sup>196</sup>. The entire exploration thus far has been a demonstration of how this might be approached. The methodological underpinnings of the *Performed Narrative* offered in Chapter One should suffice to support this claim

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<sup>195</sup> This title is inspired by Steven Fesmire’s metaphor of *morality as art* which will be explored at length in this chapter.

<sup>196</sup> To review, see Chapter 1, section 1.6.2.



from the perspective of narrative exposition of lived experience being a form of self enquiry, and more specifically “teacher self-research” (Griggs 2001: 25); and that such self-scrutiny of lived experience (personal history) inevitably is an ethical process that delineates our evolving “relation to the good” (Smith 2002 in Brinkman 2008: 411).

I also expressed confidence in the idea that as educators and artists we have at our disposal a wealth of creative *resources*<sup>197</sup> that we might be able to draw on to assist us in such a process, and that relying on our natural proclivities and talents might “increase our interest, curiosity and even a sense of ‘(serious) play’”. As I entered this second research phase I sought metaphors, concepts, understandings and approaches that might support the relevance of utilising such creative *resources* within a process of ethical self enquiry.

In Steven Fesmire’s article *Morality as Art: Dewey, Metaphor, and Moral Imagination* (1999) and his book *John Dewey and Moral Imagination: Pragmatism in Ethics* (2003), I found support for both my intuition to bed my research in creative, artistic or intuitive practices, and what I believe is a superbly inspiring resource and orientation for performance educators.

Drawing strongly on the ideas of Dewey regarding the imagination, Fesmire argues for the validity of the metaphor “Morality as Art” (1999: 532-533). Metaphors, suggest Lackoff and Johnson, “provide an organization of important [moral] experiences that our conventional conceptual system does not make available” (1980: 141). In *Moral Imagination* Johnson describes metaphor as “the locus of our imaginative exploration of possibilities for action” (1993: 35). Metaphors are in a sense memes, or clusters of memes. Because they are organised in a particular way they hold a unified force that form part of our unconscious relationship to the world. They are “inherited interpretive structures” that evince our “socialised habits” (Fesmire 1999: 530). The metaphors we create to explain life become tools we use to navigate it. They are an ink-blot or impression that reveals and reflects our experiences, and this template in turn become a litmus that allows us to test or measure future experiences.

Metaphors emerge through our interactions: we act on the basis of our metaphorical understanding, the world speaks back to us, and our metaphors in turn persist or change. Far from rendering deliberation arbitrary or unstructured, metaphors tether deliberations, both highlighting and concealing alternatives for conduct (Fesmire 1999: 530).

In so far as Fesmire is concerned, to overlook the powerful role metaphor plays in our lives is to “leave one of morality’s most valuable resources drifting capriciously” (1999: 233).

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<sup>197</sup> In Chapter One section 1.6.1 I mentioned: “sensory acuity and perceptiveness, well developed imaginative faculties and visualisation skills, creative improvisation and role play skills, character development skills, interpersonal skills, communication skills, narrative skills, a sound understanding of *physis* or human nature (McKeon 1968: 109), and self-observation skills”.



Fesmire's metaphor is in part inspired by the work of philosopher Mark Johnson, who suggested that "the kind of imaginative judgment [...] appropriate to the making, experiencing, and evaluating of artworks can serve as a model of moral judgment, insofar as it is pervasively imaginative in many of the same respects" (1993: 214-15). The metaphor stands in counterpoint to other metaphors that may often be used in the realm of ethics, most notably that of 'moral accounting', which tends to preside over ethical thinking and practice. Moral Accounting, according to the analysis offered by Johnson, implies the following:

1. Moral deeds are objects in transactions ("In return for our kindness, she gave us nothing but trouble")
2. Well-being is wealth ("I've had a rich life")
3. The moral account is a record of transactions ("His despicable lying counts against him in my book")
4. Moral balance is a balance of transactions ("His noble deeds far outweigh his sins")
5. Doing moral deeds is accumulating credit ("I've got to give you credit for your sacrifices")
6. Benefiting from moral deeds is accumulating debt ("He is indebted to her for her help")
7. Doing immoral deeds is accumulating debt ("He owes a debt to society for his crimes") (1993: 45-46).

Moral accounting, says Fesmire, "suppresses crucial features of morality. It ignores the dramatic and qualitative aspects of moral thinking and focuses exclusively on isolated actions of atomistic individuals seeking fixed ends" (1999: 537). While he feels the metaphor is worth preserving, Fesmire suggests that it overwhelms other salient features of morality that deserve equal expression if not greater emphasis such as "creativity, perceptiveness, expressiveness and skill" (2003: 5). In contrast, viewing ethical practice as artistic or artistry reveals the 'virtuosity' involved in playing ourselves (our personal ethical character) well, as one would play an instrument or dramaturgical character well. In our day to day decisions and choices lies the potential to exhibit sensitivity to context and the orientations of others, harness the true power of the imagination and our creative faculties and to account for the complexity and nuanced nature of directly lived and embodied experience.

Fesmire's hypothesis rests on the assumption that "moral experiences could be as richly developed as are those experiences consummated in the peaks of the fine arts" (1999: 533). This view orbits closely around John Dewey's view (in *Art as Experience* 1934) that "[a]rt is the most direct and complete manifestation there is of experience as experience", and that "[e]sthetic [sic] experience is experience in its integrity" (in Fesmire 1999: 533). For Fesmire, understanding art in its natural state as a manner of social communication brings to life its potential metaphoric congruence with the essence of sound moral conduct. Kant (*Critique of Judgment* 1790) emphatically divorced ethics and aesthetics, and such compartmentalisation has largely held sway in ethical enquiry since the eighteenth century

(Fesmire 2003: 123). Fesmire explains that Kant's morality was grounded on a "transcendental rationality" that was:

(a) disembodied (ontologically separated from the body); (b) dispassionate (able to be cleaved from feelings and bodily inclinations); (c) a-cultural (separable from any cultural conditioning); (d) atemporal and ahistorical (transcending time and not conditioned by the history of what went before); and (e) radically individual (at its best when detached from a community of co-investigators) (Fesmire 1999: 534).

Dewey's thinking by contrast, centred on "embodied, aesthetic, encultured, temporal, historical, and communal" elements (Fesmire 1999: 534). Until relatively recently, testing this schism by coming forward with notions of the validity of artistic sensibilities within the field of ethics has been to invoke criticism for subjectivising moral enquiry. Yet the *morality as art* metaphor is grounded firmly on Dewey's perspective which orientates aesthetic experience as "paradigmatic of all experience" (2003: 123). "There is no test that so surely reveals the one-sidedness of a philosophy as its treatment of art and esthetic [sic] experience [...] All the elements of our being that are displayed in special emphases and realizations in other experiences are merged in esthetic [sic] experience" (*Art as Experience* 1934 in Fesmire 2003: 123). The core of this philosophy is that artists are present-centred; they are immersed in the moment, in the *now*; with all its sensitivities, ambiguities and tangible concerns. Artists don't relinquish their immediate situation to a "remote outcome" (Fesmire 2003: 116).

Morality has parallels with art when both are viewed from the vantage of activity (process) rather than purely as product or outcome (Fesmire 1999: 533). Dewey distinguished between 'artistic' and 'aesthetic' as follows: the former is associated with the act or process of producing art and the latter with the appreciation and apprehension of the product (Fesmire 1999: 534).

A practical upshot of the aesthetic for moral conduct is that with acts that destroy, divide, or dull, there is usually production (the potentially artistic) with a minimum of perception (the aesthetic). More inclusive and enduring ends escape notice, often eclipsed by obsessive focus on the task at hand. We rightly call such an experience (im)moral rather than (an)aesthetic in order to emphasize its practical rather than immediately felt effects, but we must not lose sight of the fact that aesthetically impoverished experience, like all events, has consequences. Although perceptiveness does not guarantee a good outcome, the stilted perception of anaesthetic experience is a sure route to miserable conduct because it abandons moral intelligence to the edicts of chance and momentary impulsions (Fesmire 1999: 534-535).

When understood and harnessed in the right manner therefore, our artistic and thus aesthetic sensibilities (such as sensitivity, relevance, proposed impact, perceptual prompting or cuing), as revealed in appropriate and tasteful choices we make, are 'moral' in the sense that they are 'wise' and 'discerning'. 'Good' aesthetic or artistic choices are observant of the complex and multi-textured relationship between self and other, and within and relative to a specific frame or context.

Fesmire explores a diversity of specific art forms that each in their own way highlights pertinent aspects of the *morality as art* metaphor. The following is an attempt to summarise his ideas and frame them in relation to the species of creative *resources* (skills and talents) that this study proposes those of a performative (artistic) sensibility should naturally possess (1999: 536-539):

In *sculpture* there is a medium which can be shaped by the artist just as a moral agent can ‘sculpt’ his environment with virtuous behaviour. In the same vein a playwright and director ‘sculpt’ symbolic and/or literal mise-en-scene elements (scenery, costume, props) to provide added depth of meaning and create atmosphere and mood. These are often realised with the assistance of set designers, costume designers, stagecraft specialists (lighting, sound, special effects) who too ‘sculpt’ in their respective mediums of expression and expertise. The structuring of this *Performed Narrative*, in terms of selecting inclusions and omissions (what to reveal or hide), sequencing content and using metaphors to emphasise salient concepts, resonates with this concept of ‘sculpting’. To recall, in Chapter Three<sup>198</sup> qualitative researcher, artist and choreographer Valerie Janesick made use of the metaphor of journal writing as a form of ‘sculpting’ (1999: 521). In sculpting the medium issues constraints just as our social and pedagogical interactions imply moral constraints. Behaviour is determined and shaped in interaction. It could be said that other people - our students, colleagues, peers - and the diverse exigencies of life are never as predictable or malleable as clay, stage properties or words on a page.

In *dramatic writing* the playwright explores character and motive in specific contexts. Such exploration uses imaginative projection to determine the best course of action by comparing alternatives. Potential outcomes are structured and weighed for congruence against character dispositions and habits; be they virtues or vices. Good dramatists and creative moral thinkers contemplate, ruminate, and take their time to revise and moderate pathways of action in draft format before settling on a final version; they don’t simply react spontaneously, compulsively or randomly. This notion struck a resonant chord for me with regard especially to the process of constructing the *Parables*. In a sense I experienced the practice as a form of ethical education or training, using my imaginal and artistic sensibilities to create a sense of verisimilitude to real life potentials; of entering into the orientation and character of the other (an-other) and thereby illuminating ethical considerations in the realm of performance and its education.

In *acting* the narratives of our characters are interwoven with those of the other characters, just as our life narratives are interwoven with those with whom we interact in daily life. In moral life however, we are not bound by a prescribed text, but like good improvisational actors or dancers we must sensitively respond to our ‘co-performers’ and the audience. Improvisation does involve freedom but also implies significant parameters: it is then a commitment to enhancing and promoting with

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<sup>198</sup> To review, see Section 3.1.

sensitivity and empathy the ‘life dramas’ of those around us, and the boundaries of circumstance and milieu. This holds specific relevance for me with regard to the negotiation of ‘exposure’ of self and others during the course of formulating this narrative and which will be discussed at some length in the chapter to follow.

Finding ways to articulate and share our ethical experiences is a form of improvisation and negotiation between our own license of self-expression and the limits implied by peaceful co-habitation and respect for the rights of others. Also, with regard to this study, I continuously improvised exercises and practices to assist me with navigating the emotional and psychological complexities of engaging with a process of ethical self enquiry and finding new ways of extracting my personal *resources* and probing them more deeply. In the additional step I included in the *recapitulation* process (‘*stepping into another’s shoes*’) I ‘acted’ (in the imagination) as if I was every ‘other’ in the scenes I explored from my past, thereby activating my empathy for their unique orientations and expanding the range of perspectives I had at my disposal upon which to build ethical understanding/deliberation.

*Improvised jazz* is a give and take musical ‘conversation’ seeking harmony and attunement between instruments (moral agents). Traditional or pre-discovered forms are re-made and developed through innovation in the same way morality evolves in social interaction. In his *Churchill Report* (2009), Seton investigates the relevance of the work of Prof. Patricia Shaw to ethical practice in performance training, in which improvisation plays a central role. As a Complex Responsive Process Consultant to organizations, Shaw advocates “the exploration of concrete circumstances, particular experiences - what they actually know about because they’ve been there [...] a knowledge from within the situation”; which stands in direct contrast to simply “anticipating and relying on ‘best practice’” (2009: 14). Seton (2009: 12-13) explains that in this model “there is no objective ‘organisation’ or ‘system’ that we can claim to step outside of in order to control or predict its present or future behaviour”. Rather, Shaw suggests “that organisations or social groups need to be viewed as patterns of interactions between people that are iterated i.e. repeated with subtle variations in the ongoing, ‘here and now’ of social interaction. The moment we become involved in engaging with a social group, we shape it as we are shaped by it, **at the same time**” (2009: 12-13)<sup>199</sup>.

This holds resonance with Hazlitt’s view of classical harmony and its relation to ethics:

In a symphony, every player and instrument has his or its assigned role in carrying the theme or producing the harmony. Any false or untimely note from any instrument, any failure in tempo or synchronization, would spoil the cooperative result. So with the symphony of life. [...] Even a rather poor ethical rule is better than no rule at all. This is again because we need to know in our daily actions what to expect of each other, because we are obliged to rely on each other’s conduct, and must be reasonably able to count in advance on what the action of others is going to be (2012: 182-183).

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<sup>199</sup> Emphasis in original.

One of the central themes of this study is the idea that raising *to* personal consciousness suggested ethical considerations in the habitus of performance and its education may contribute to a raising *of* collective consciousness - where and when the individual/personal interfaces with the collective. As touched on previously, in Grotowski's cosmology it is through acts of exposure that the possibility is borne for the individual and the collective to "converge" and thus for a true meeting to take place between equals (Kumiega 1987: 132). At the point where personal discoveries are shared with the group there exists the potential for individual orientations to be raised to a more universal orientation where a harmony or attunement between colleagues within a specific environment, context or industry might arise. Such attunement would obviously be critical in establishing shared points of departure for the creation of a shared ethos or ethical code of conduct/framework. But such a process will require commitment and does not come without challenges. Frictions may equally arise. As my process of literary review unfolded I found that I had to adjust and organise my thinking to keep abreast with other/differing/new and/or more general/universal/informed perspectives in ethics. I had to be willing to change in some instances or stand my ground in others. The process became a transformational dance or improvisation, with various ethical theorists stepping in to be my 'dance partners' as I learned to step in tune with their views; or alternatively clashed with them as they 'trod on my toes'.

How the *morality as art* metaphor relates to the specific art forms shared above is insightful and useful, but the metaphor also holds more general merit. Fesmire explains that there are literal similarities between moral conduct and artistic production. For one, they both have a narrative component; a "story" or "journey" structure (2003: 113). This is particularly relevant in light of the core positioning of the *Performed Narrative* and the creation of the fictional *Parables* as forms of ethical self enquiry. However, Fesmire describes the process of exploring beyond the literal as a mapping of parallels and correspondences between a "source" and "target" domain (1999: 540). His view of metaphor transcends the conventional understanding of "rhetorical flourishes", "replaceable ornaments" or "arresting comparisons"; instead he situates metaphors within Lackoff and Johnson's terminology as "cross-domain conceptual mappings" (1999: 540). He breaks the correspondences down into five distinctions (2003: 113-118) as summarised here:

- *Perceptiveness* relates to Aristotle's concept of 'citizen perceivers' - empowered moral agents - who sensitively and with skilful observation and appropriate feeling attend to the full scope of situations. Perceptiveness in this sense is not a sterile act but imbued with passion for life. Perceptiveness gets stunted when product is valued more highly than process or rules override the nuances of a given circumstance. The intuitive 'rightness' of a moral act is synonymous with the 'rightness' an artist feels when making a creative or aesthetic choice.

- *Creativity* has a spontaneous aspect but it is also tempered by forms, genres and social milieu. Creativity can break the bonds of conformity, inertia, apathy and habit. Creativity is ‘play’ - it is an ongoing improvisation in search of the novel and relevant versus the prescriptive.
- *Expressiveness* delineates our capacity to wrangle with potentials and forms in order to reach the most appropriate and pleasing realisation. If impulses and compulsions can be restrained and transformed into intelligent responses our creations and expressions can rise above pure reactivity and shape and re-define the world. Morality is an expressive act - it defines who we are within the highest aspiration we hold of who we wish to be and become.
- *Skill* speaks to the idea of artistic virtuosity. The skilled moral agent and the skilled artist both strive to refine their talents and build their intuitive or innate talent as well as developing new capabilities. Masterful habits are synonymous with skilfully executed and mastered artistic techniques.
- *Response of the other* signifies the fact that a moral act is subject to communal evaluation. Few deeds happen in isolation. The ‘other’ is the audience and art critic whose perspective must be accounted for in each decision made. Audience expectations and projected reactions inform deliberation regarding proposed actions and choices.

Obviously all metaphors have their limits or as Fesmire puts it “they highlight and hide” (2003: 119). He points out that many contemporary artists may “revel in values that seem exactly opposite of virtues and ideals important to moral life” (2003: 119); they may revel in vices - both in their private lives, and in their aesthetic (or anaesthetic and thus immoral) productions. They may, for example, strive (consciously or unconsciously) to produce discord versus harmony, destruction versus creation. Still, the “generic traits of artistry are more stable”, says Fesmire (2003: 119). An artist can be a moral agent if his or her creations transcend ignorance or sentimental, reactive and indulgent emotional displays. If artists are intelligent enough to evince perceptiveness, creativity, expressiveness, skill and response of the other they can exhibit ‘virtuosity’ and sound character even when they aim to shatter norms and upset the status quo. But here the paradoxical and ambiguous tensions between license and limits can once more be felt, for I argue that in order to do so and to retain one’s ethical integrity demands a strong and grounded sense of one’s ethical character.

I say this in light of my experience of the process of creating the *Parables* or hypothetical case studies. I do not condone, endorse or align myself personally with the kind of language or the themes of sexuality, abuse, nudity and violence depicted in these narratives. In this sense writing many of the *Parables* was an uncomfortable experience. In many instances the content is a far cry from how I would, and do, prefer to express myself artistically. In Chapter Six<sup>200</sup> I mentioned that creating the *Parables* was not a ‘pleasant’ experience; I was in fact beset by mood swings, and certainly entering these realms of human experience affected me on a very deep level. In order to accurately and

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<sup>200</sup> See Section 6.2.3.



believably portray the characters and the contexts (organisational habitus or social imaginary) contained in the *Parables* and capture and communicate the ethical considerations my research yielded, I effectively had to transgress my own ethical ‘limits’. I found this to be a paradoxical situation and one with which many artists may often find themselves confronted.

In the “romantic period” observes Harrop, “the ethical idea that the actor, as ethical human being, shouldn’t violate his or her own integrity, brought into aesthetic focus the phenomenological issue [...] of who the actor is when on stage” (1992: 35). To what extent then, does my ‘performance’ of these narratives reflect on who I am as a person? Can I be separated from or remain detached from my writing? Throughout this writing I have argued most emphatically that I cannot. Does my willingness then to transgress these ‘limits’ cast aspersions on my ethical character? And might creating and performing these narratives potentially influence and corrupt me? As touched on in previous chapters, there are dangers involved and thus ethical limits and risks to be weighed. Based on my experience and the understanding gained during the course of the research phase being reflected on in this chapter (Trawling Phase 2) I would suggest that being aware of the “contagion the mirror neuron system conveys” (Keyzers in McTaggart 2011: 66) is critical for artists who endeavour to explore ethically contentious material; even if it is for the greater ‘good’. The dangers of ‘character invasion’ and the potential that ‘entering into another’s shoes’ may leave a ‘residue’ and result in ethical vulnerability and corruption are real<sup>201</sup>.

Harrop observes that the actor’s role is to “retain the objectivity to mirror society’s shortcomings - as well as its virtues - to itself” (1992: 108). And I would suggest that ‘retaining objectivity’ should be more accurately understood to mean being capable of retaining a high degree of ‘virtuosity’ or moral artistry in order to remain immune to being contaminated and adversely affected by such expressions and explorations. It is here that the value of undergoing a *process* and retaining an ongoing *practice* of ethical self enquiry in performance and its education comes to the fore, as a means of remaining fully conscious of the risks involved in using artistry as a moral ‘playground’ and a means to personal/social enlightenment.

Another critique of the morality as art metaphor may be that artistic creations are also generally realised as finished products while moral artistry is a never ending work in progress; yet as Fesmire points out, while productions may come and go they are nodes of progression in the narrative of an artist’s life (2003: 119). Just so the resolution of one ethical dilemma or quandary will inevitably be followed by another. An actor might also be called to play the same character in different productions at different times in his or her life, bringing to each rendition wisdom gained from previous experience. Similarly, ethical situations may arise over time and educators can draw on previous

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<sup>201</sup> To review this territory, see Chapter 2, section 2.2.4.



experiences and their evolving ethical maturity to make increasingly competent and effective choices and decisions in the present.

Finally, not all moral decisions can be made in the ‘safe-space’ of the studio or rehearsal room; some decisions must be made on the move (2003: 119). Yet, there are forms of art that are improvised and that call for a constant narrowing of the gap between impulse and response.

Clearly perceptiveness, creativity, expressiveness, skill and response of the other constitute creative *resources* performance educators should have at their disposal, and as such Fesmire’s *morality as art* metaphor goes some significant way to supporting my suggestion that as artist-educators we are well equipped to engage with ethics and ethical self enquiry under the steam of our innate powers and sensibilities, and within the security and familiarity of our own realm and its associated ways of knowing and perceiving the world.

Engaging with Fesmire’s metaphor brought about a very important realisation for me. While the nature of this enquiry predisposed me toward exploring fiction as a means to artistically transforming and translating subjective personal experiences into narratives that could be shared in a group context, I had not been thinking expansively enough. I would suggest that fiction is merely one way of interpreting and expressing experiences that describe ethical concerns. In Chapter Six, Hogan (2008) Rossiter (2011) and Cranston and Kusanovich (2013) provided the alternative of using forms of process drama, and scripting - or improvising - and performing scenarios involving ethically questionable behaviours and practices. Fesmire’s metaphor suggests a far wider compass is possible. I would suggest that educators explore whatever means they have at their disposal and make use of their greatest talents and proclivities to serve their moral artistry; whether this is dance, video, physical theatre, mime or puppetry. I believe that the more organic the style and genre of expression is to an individual, the more deeply they will be able to enter the world of the ethical concerns being addressed and the more effectively they will be able to communicate them.

## **8.2 Extending the metaphor of ‘Serious Play’ beyond drama, theatre and performance education and into ethical self enquiry and ethics education**

Throughout this exposition thus far I have repeatedly emphasised my intuitive sense that before being faced with imposed rules, codes, outlines of duties or the opinions of others, I believe that educators should identify and articulate their own personal ethos<sup>202</sup>. This became of significant importance to me when I reached this second phase of literary research and was confronted with so very many

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<sup>202</sup> To review, see in particular again Chapter 1, sections 1.6.1 and 1.6.2.

viewpoints and opinions regarding what ethics is in fact all about, what constitutes right and wrong, and the myriad ethical modalities or approaches on offer.

Ethics is a minefield of opposing ideologies, special interests and temperamental proclivities made explosive by the importance of the topic. Perhaps more than any area of enquiry aside from faith, the moral realm is open to high dudgeon, defensiveness, and subjective interpretation; despite shared universal tendencies, this subject retains its fascination precisely because no two people - much less two groups - will ever agree on everything (Matousek 2011: 17).

Many contemporary ethical theorists contend that no universal moral systems exist and it is widely accepted that moral prescriptions differ sharply from one location, group or era to the next (Haynes in Hogan 2008: 14, Schweitzer in Hazlitt 2012: 3, Makenroth 2013: 1). To compound matters, there tends to be a great deal of inconsistency in the definitions and usage of central terminology in the field; for example, some theorists (as I tend to do) use ‘moral’ and ‘ethical’ interchangeably (Thiroux and Kraseman 2012: 2), and the dictionary definitions of these words tend to cycle back on each other, confounding and confusing attempts to establish clear distinctions (Erhard and Jenson 2013: 36). As Kline points out, “(s)ome have argued that the entire field of ethics has gone wrong because of misunderstandings about how people use moral language” (2008: 10-11). Moreover he emphasises the importance of learning how to reflect on moral beliefs and positions in order to develop both “moral maturity” and “moral autonomy”, both of which are arguably critical for educators in any field (2008: 8). This implies becoming informed about how reasoning about morals and ethics is generally approached, as well as understanding what morals and ethics are and how various moral and ethical systems work (2008: 8).

Is there, however, any sense in ploughing for the thousand and second time a field which has already been ploughed a thousand and one times? Has not everything which can be said about ethics already been said by Lao-tse, Confucius, the Buddha, and Zarathustra; by Amos and Isaiah; by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle; by Epicurus and the Stoics; by Jesus and Paul; by the thinkers of the Renaissance, of the “Aufklärung,” and of Rationalism; by Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hume; by Spinoza and Kant; by Fichte and Hegel; by Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and others? Is there any possibility of getting beyond all these contradictory convictions of the past to new beliefs which will have a stronger and more lasting influence? Can the ethical kernel of the thoughts of all these men be collected into an idea of the ethical, which will unite all the energies to which they appeal? We must hope so, if we are not to despair of the fate of the human race (Schweitzer in Hazlitt 2012: 3).

Is there any point for performance educators to begin the process of improving ethics in the field by ploughing the field of philosophy (and I might add, based on my research - relevant sciences and the arts) which clearly has been ploughed so many times before? This is a Metaethical question. But it also has a Normative aspect<sup>203</sup>. Is it right or wrong to remain ignorant when we clearly have so much

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<sup>203</sup> The study of ethics falls into two main categories. Descriptive Ethics, also called Scientific Ethics, asks: “What are our ethical values?” (Kline 2008: 8). It is centred on descriptions of moral behaviours and the codes

to learn, lack ethical frameworks and are to some significant degree beginning from scratch? Henry Hazlitt (1963), arguing the merit of writing yet another book on ethics - *The Foundations of Morality* (2012) - confronts the question of 're-ploughing the field'. His response is that his decision to make a contribution to the discipline would appear to be rather presumptuous considering the fact that some of the best minds in the history of philosophy have given it their best shot - and in Schweitzer's view failed - were it not for two key considerations: "first, ethics is primarily a *practical* problem; and secondly, it is a problem that has not yet been satisfactorily solved" (Hazlitt 2012: 2)<sup>204</sup>. The supreme irony of ethics is that we haven't gotten it 'right' yet. Nor have we necessarily gotten it entirely 'wrong'. Ethics is a work in progress. Knowing what others have offered regarding ethics gives us a foundation, a broad scope; exposure to their ideas and contributions becomes a matter of raising personal and collective consciousness. And if a group of educators within the profession are exposed to and versed in the same background of ideas they can begin to create a shared discourse.

The objective is not to follow the rules laid down by others but to have the greatest possible range of insight to draw on. As Velasquez et al. explain: "each approach gives us important information with which to determine what is ethical in a particular circumstance. And much more often than not, the different approaches do lead to similar answers" (2009: 1). Furthermore, the fact that performance educators are faced with ethical issues specific to their praxis means that they have a unique contribution to make toward solving the 'problem' that has, as Hazlitt points out, never been solved. Knowing the lie of the land gives perspective and orientation. Humanity is still seeking and learning with regard to ethics, and it is only through knowledge of what has already been contributed to the discussion by others that can engender the potential to observe exactly what unique offerings performance education might have to share, and what it stands to learn.

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various individuals or groups conform to or ascribe to. Descriptive Ethics explores ethics in a multi-disciplinary fashion, often incorporating findings from sociology, psychology, history and anthropology in order to penetrate more deeply the motivating factors, belief and value systems that underlie and drive people's choices and behaviours. It describes but does not pass moral judgements. The second category is known as Philosophical Ethics and it has two domains. Normative Ethics asks: "What moral standards should we use?" (Kline 2008: 9). It is concerned with the creation and assessment of moral codes and standards, seeks to define what people ought to do, and considers whether their behaviour is moral, ethical and reasonable. It does pass judgements about right or wrong. The entire field of Applied Ethics falls into this category. Applied Ethics draws on insights offered by philosophers and theologians and attempts to apply them to real world situations (Kline 2008: 9). The second kind of Philosophical Ethics is Analytic ethics, also called Metaethics, and it is focussed on rational enquiry into the validity of presuppositions upon which Normative ethical systems are founded. The Greek "*meta*" means to "go beyond" (Thiroux and Kraseman 2012: 6). Metaethics asks the big questions about the nature of reality, worldviews, and understandings of the human desires and values underpinning various ethical systems and standards. Semantic debates regarding key terminology in ethics and definitions of 'right' and 'wrong' or 'good' and 'evil' are an important part of Metaethics. Whether ethics and morals are important at all, and why, also falls in the realm of Metaethics. Being informed about these categorisations in ethical studies is important because in the process of creating and developing standards and evaluating various ethical considerations educators might inadvertently be approaching issues from one or another of these orientations, without necessarily being cognisant of the fact that they are doing so. This can, in Kline's view (2008: 6), lead to unnecessary debates and conflicts which should ideally be avoided.

<sup>204</sup> Emphasis in original.

There is support (Carter 1998, Hogan 2008) for the importance, success and validity of ethical education or training for teachers of the sort Kline suggests, and in my research the growth curve I underwent was nothing short of exponential<sup>205</sup>. Ethics is indeed a serious business, and a veritable philosophical quagmire. Finding a way through this “minefield” as Matousek (2011: 17) aptly describes it, requires having your wits about you, it calls for being present and wide awake. Throughout the research process I found both my mind and emotions stretched and challenged. At times I experienced overwhelm, anxiety and despair as I struggled to find certain ground, a solid footing, a place upon which to stand on behalf of myself and the world of performance and its education I indirectly represent through this study, to stake a claim and assert: “Here is a framework or model that will serve”. But no such definitive set of rules could I find. What I found was risk, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity and impermanence.

For much of the time I was immersed within, and focused on, the ethical failures of both my own practice as an educator and those of the performance education habitus in general. I was so mired in the ‘serious’ that it took a while for it to dawn on me that I had in fact found my way home: ‘risk, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity and impermanence’; are these not words artists can relate to? I had forgotten what performance itself is all about: ‘serious *play*’. As visionary consciousness writer Marilyn Ferguson suggests: “The game is a metastory we’re telling ourselves. Played well it reveals who and what we are, where we are going, and why we haven’t arrived. We gradually see that we can’t arrive at our destination by land or by sea but only by vision and pluck” (2005: 198). When it comes to ethics, humanity as a whole is in a process of learning, and before even embarking on this exploratory journey it is useful to remember this, and recall it again whenever negativity threatens to dominate the process. And learning, while serious, has its roots in play; as does theatre. Ferguson again:

We’ll never have our act together. Once we give up that fantasy the show can go on. We can’t beat the system by memorising the rules. There are no rules - just myriad principles that reconfigure as they collide and mate, spontaneously giving birth to new principles even as we sleep (2005: 197).

By emphasising the idea of ‘play’ I don’t intend to undermine the ‘serious’ aspect of this study, demean the real potentials for abuse implied in unethical behaviour, or undervalue the suffering of real or potential ‘victims’. ‘Play’, in the sense in which I am using it, does not have to do with frivolity or a lack of diligence, but with a spirit of adventure, discovery and improvisation; where failure is accepted and even encouraged as part of the process, and prescriptions do not limit investigation. This attitude is mirrored in Matsuba and Walker’s description of adaptive ego processes for moral development in

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<sup>205</sup> The lack of such ethical education is in fact an ethical concern, as is the lack of pedagogical training for acting and performance teachers of which such ethical training might constitute a part. See Chapter 7, suggested ethical considerations 40-43. This is something Seton (2009: 56) highlights in his *Churchill Report* which advocates for “more intentionally formalised training and supervision of acting teachers (in voice, movement, acting, directing and so on)”. *Parable 2* in Chapter 7 highlights many of these issues.

the intraceptive domain as including “the abilities to tolerate uncertainty and ambiguity, to sensitively and accurately take account of others’ feelings and ideas, and to be appropriately playful without being constrained by situational demands - in short, to be open, aware, and sensitive, and without self doubting and regressive tendencies” (1982: 479). By balancing the ‘serious’ with ‘play’, and recalling that we have a creative say, a voice in shaping the evolution of ethics, I concur with Matousek (2011: 14) who suggests that we can “elevate” the discussion around ethics versus causing it to “gravitate”. Furthermore, as a student and practitioner of the performing arts I am under no illusion that I, or just about any other living human, can claim to be ethically consistent and virtuous under all circumstances and at all times. I see what Hazlitt refers to as the “negative Golden Rule”<sup>206</sup> as a way of framing what I believe is a necessary balancing of the ‘serious’ with ‘play’:

The general moral code, in brief, should not impose excessive positive duties on us, so that we cannot even play, enjoy ourselves, or relax without a guilty conscience. Unless the code prescribes a level of conduct that most of us can reasonably hope to achieve, it will simply be disregarded. There must be definite limits to our duties. People must be allowed a moral breathing spell once in a while. The greatest happiness is promoted by rules that do not make the requirements of morality ubiquitous and oppressive. That is one reason why the negative Golden Rule: “Do not do unto others as you would not want others to do unto you” is a better rule of thumb, in most circumstances, than the positive Golden Rule (Hazlitt 2012: 157-158).

The metaphor of ‘serious play’ evolved into what became for me a central means to navigate the territory of ethics in performance and its education as research unfolded. Drama, theatre and performance, more so perhaps than any other domain of human experience and expression, remind us that identities are not fixed and we all play a variety of different roles with associated sub-identities; roles that have conflicting agendas. We are each of us a motley of characters and each character has a different set of rules and codes that govern its behaviour. Matousek touches this orientation very eloquently:

We’re kaleidoscopes of contradictions, Satyricons of lust, greed, and hatred, rationalizers of fairness and justice, idolators, cheaters and fakes - not to mention hypocrites - with hearts that long to be divine. We are moral platypuses with seemingly mismatched parts who manage to come up with healthy eggs. Pulled in opposite directions, we search each day for some sort of middle path, a balance point, to navigate our way through this obstacle course. We ask ourselves the Holy Question: How ought we to live? (2011: 4).

No singular framework, modality or approach is in itself complete or capable of making answer to every ethical question or dilemma adequately (Carter 1998: 1); no single script can capture the full compass of human experience. Yet each offers a perspective on this question that resides at the very heart of ethics: “how ought we/I to live?” (Matousek 2011, Hazlitt 2012). Each modality might be

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<sup>206</sup> “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” (Lombardo 2011a: 3). Kant’s ‘categorical imperative’ is a version of this rule: “Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law” (Kant 1993: 30).

likened to a character in the play of ethical life, and each has something useful and valid to offer us. Each has a role to play depending on the particular scene and circumstances. Like donning costumes that various ethical philosophers and theorists have tailored to suit themselves and/or different cultural and historical milieus and societies, the process of reviewing ethical frameworks and modalities allows us to hold, entertain and experience multiple perspectives<sup>207</sup>.

Even though there is debate around whether exploring ethical modalities in a literary or theoretical sense has any value (Cranston and Kusanovich 2013: 29), I believe that exposure to, and investigation of what ethics is and how different minds have navigated the “minefield” (Matousek 2011: 17) provides a necessary groundwork for any educator, or person, faced with exploring ethics more deeply in their own practice (and thus life) and as a means toward developing departmental or institutional codes and/or guidelines. Ethical modalities are lenses that may differ markedly from our own, and engaging with them demands that we approach and engage courageously, with an open-mind and open-heart; remaining always cognisant of the fact that when it comes to good and bad, right or wrong, we do indeed all have our own orientations. In this process I found myself challenged to *perceive differently* and be *sensitive to diversity*. These are key ethical orientations and proclivities that might be described as requisite in a complex and increasingly global culture. The cultivation of empathy as a force of social cohesion and co-creation can be described as the ability to enter into the vantage and predisposition of others, to ‘walk in another’s shoes’.

In trying on the ‘costumes’ of different ethical modalities, confronting alternative viewpoints (the ‘other’) via a process of *attempting* to step into the minds and hearts of other theorists, we are challenged to confront, become more acutely aware of, and thus ironically stand an opportunity to become more of, ourselves (Mulryan 2009: 143). In order to understand my own process of ethical self-review, I required some measure against which to observe and orient myself; and various ethical modalities are in effect ‘others’ that can hold up a mirror of self<sup>208</sup>. I emphasise ‘*attempting*’ because as Mulryan (2009: 142) argues, the ‘other’ is not and never can be the self. Hans-Georg Gadamer’s (1989) understanding of the relation of the interpreter to the text is a useful way of understanding how the self (individual) is defined by the other (universal), and supports my experience of ‘dialoguing’ with ethical theorists and modalities through a review of literature:

The interpreter seeks no more than to understand the universal, the text - i.e., to understand what it says, what constitutes the text’s meaning and significance. In order

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<sup>207</sup> With regard to rule-based ethical systems, this understanding of trying on ethical systems as one would a costume to ‘test the fit’ is supported by Fesmire’s understanding that: “Rules, along with their superordinate first principles, overstep their pivotal function as idealized summaries of moral wisdom when they pretend to be more than guiding hypotheses that help open situations to inquiry” (Fesmire 2003: 59). Rules should be treated as “intellectual instruments to be tested and confirmed - and altered - through consequences effected by acting upon them” (Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty* 1929 in Fesmire 2003: 59).

<sup>208</sup> “To foreground one’s own prejudices in this way requires that someone else asserts herself in her own separate validity” (Mulryan 2009: 143).



to understand that, he must not try to disregard himself and his particular hermeneutical situation. He must relate the text to this situation if he wants to understand at all. That is, the interpreter can only understand the universal (text) through his particular situatedness, and, in an interdependent way, can only understand his particular situatedness through the relation of the universal to it (Mulryan 2009: 141)<sup>209</sup>.

Martin Heidegger (1962 in Mulryan 2009: 143) suggests that this process can cause significant anxiety and onset existential crisis; a “feeling not at home”. But key in the review of ethical modalities and theories is not an expectation or desire to *become* the other, or to permanently take on another’s point of view, but to become sympathetic to and accepting of the other, and in doing so, to better understand and know ourselves. Mulryan describes this process as “the courage of dialogue”:

The courage of dialogue is the courage to face anxiety, but it is the courage to face anxiety in order to maintain the integrity of both dialogical participants. In the case of dialogue, self-affirmation does not destroy the other. Rather, it maintains space for others to also affirm themselves (Mulryan 2009: 146).

### 8.3 Visionary perspectives: alternative approaches to drama, theatre and performance education

During the course of literary review I also found myself seeking alternative views of how drama, theatre and performance education might be approached. I hunted for new visions that might offer fresh approaches to the *how* (pedagogical ideologies) of training that would necessary impact and influence the *what* (practices). As examples I would like to introduce the following because of the impact they had on my own thinking:

In her proposed new curriculum - delineated in the article *Phronesis or techne? Theatre Studies as Moral Agency* (2005) - Anne Berkeley of the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, USA, envisions a reconstruction of theatre studies as “a civically-oriented curriculum, contextualised in students’ aesthetic, cultural, and social interests” (2005: 215). Her proposal is built on a “theory of knowledge” that “intertwines the acts of theory and action, life and art, in promoting theatre’s capacity for democratic dialogue”. Central to her proposal is Aristotle’s concept of *phronesis* or ‘practical reason’ (versus *techne* or technical competency) as the basis for “a morally engaged pedagogy as civic discourse” (2005: 216). I venture to argue that many of the suggested ethical concerns I encountered during the course of my enquiry into lived experience would be confronted and navigated as a matter of course if her proposal was implemented.

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<sup>209</sup> This orientation offers much support for the presentation of this *Performed Narrative* (text) as a form of ethical self enquiry - and an opportunity for the reader to engage with and enter the “experience” (ethical encounter) on a level that transcends mere engagement with an “artefact” (Richards 2012: 55); and thus all the while encouraged/invited to engage always from his or her unique perspective.



In his article *Acting together: ensemble as a democratic process in art and life* (2009), Jonathan Neelands of the University of Warwick in the U.K. explores very similar ideas. He positions professional theatre understandings of ensemble artistry “in the context of revolutionary shifts from the pro-technical to the pro-social” (2009: 173). The emphasis in ensemble is on inclusion versus exclusion<sup>210</sup> and collaboration versus self-interest; thereby sidestepping many ethical considerations that may owe their origins to the destructive nature of competition<sup>211</sup> and narcissistic<sup>212</sup> tendencies. Neelands envisions a potential for transforming performance into a model that no longer treats the audience as passive non-actors: “The idea that we are all social actors with the possibility of being our own artistic actors in the direction of our realities and our dramas will need to be reclaimed” (2009: 186). His research direction points to observing whether “ensemble-based theatre can offer a model of a fully participatory, rather than representational, democratic community offering a fully participatory, rather than representational, theatre. A better version of the real world on an achievable scale” (2009: 187).

As a final example, David Wright’s (2000) proposal of considering drama education as a ‘self-organising system’ seeks useful parallels between drama pedagogy and systems theory. In his view:

[A] systems analysis allows teachers, students and researchers to step back from the subject, to imagine, then construct connections more clearly (not the least being the researcher’s own connection to the subject). In this increasingly rewarding field, science meets poetry in an imaginative synthesis of research and learning (2000: 23).

In “self-organising systems theory”, explains Wright, “the processes through which explanations ‘feed back’ into the system”, allow for the creation of opportunities to “reflect on not only the experience, but the context of its occurrence” (2000: 23). The value of understanding and incorporating such a model in the context of performance and its education should be abundantly clear in light of the culture of ‘silence’ or ‘non-questioning’ touched on in Chapter Four of this narrative. Dialogue and feedback or asking ‘why?’ creates opportunities not only for avoiding contexts and practices of abuse and unethical behavior due to the suppression or repression of moral emotions, but may simultaneously improve and enhance, revision and evolve, the entire process of practicing and teaching the art of performance<sup>213</sup>.

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<sup>210</sup> See ethical ‘territory’ no. 1 in the Table of suggested ethical considerations in Chapter 7.

<sup>211</sup> See *Parables* 6 and 14, and suggested ethical considerations 4, 57 and 60 in Chapter 7.

<sup>212</sup> See *Parable* 14, and suggested ethical consideration 69 in Chapter 7.

<sup>213</sup> For further insight into the ‘why’, see Chapter 10, section 10.2. Revisit also *Parables* 15 and 16, and suggested ethical consideration 34 in Chapter 7.

#### 8.4 Gathering in the net: literary review as an ‘ethical dialogue’ or ‘ethical encounter’ and a form of ethics education

Trawling Phase 1 furnished me with a clarified sense of my personal ethos, a suggested list of ethical considerations in drama, theatre and performance education and a collection of *Parables* with such concerns embedded in them. In Trawling Phase 2 I was challenged to reflect on my findings relative to a diversity of ethical approaches and modalities including: Universalist, Fairness or Justice, Rights, Duty, Common Good, Rational, Care, Intuitive, Virtue, Emotional, Egoist, Altruistic, Utilitarian, Consequentialist, Relativist (personal or social), Contractarianist or Contractualist, and Situationist. Donning these approaches as costumes called me into dialogue with alternative and often conflicting points of view which was a form of ethical education/maturation.

The actor courageously creates and enters the reality of the character, but must then be able to detach once the curtain falls, enriched, transformed and perhaps even enlightened by what the character has shared in the exchange<sup>214</sup>. Learning and exposure change us. A personal process of ethical self enquiry as demonstrated in Trawling Phase 1 is in my view critically important as a means to identify one’s personal ethos and the ‘ground’ upon and from which ethical choices and decisions might be made. However, engaging in literary review as an ‘ethical dialogue’ or ‘ethical encounter’ played a critical role in my ethical education and maturation and supports for me the necessity of moral/ethical education in conjunction with ethical self enquiry or even (as in my particular case) as *part of it*<sup>215</sup>. Again this reinforces the fact that while ethics may be personal, it is ultimately and unavoidably also relational. Dialogue regarding ethical orientations, the negotiation of positions, and in some instances the compromise of positions is requisite in finding collective (thus mutually respectful and beneficial) resolution to ethical dilemmas and concerns. While the ethical self enquiry process explored in this study aims in a determined manner to work in ‘seclusion’ until such time as a personal ethos has been defined or conscientised, and ethical considerations based on subjective experience have been identified, I do believe that self-motivated ethics education will benefit this process. Once dialogue has been initiated a more formal education in ethics to which to refer, and upon which to ground discussion would be beneficial for a staff or group (and students) tasked with establishing and maintaining a shared ethos (departmental/institutional).

Trawling Phase 2 ultimately led me to recognise that making use of metaphors such as *morality as art* and *serious play* might catalyse a shift in attitude that redirects the emphasis in ethical enquiry from ‘prescriptions’ (a negative orientation) to ‘explorations/improvisations’ (a more positive or

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<sup>214</sup> “In the case of dialogue, the person who faces the uncanniness, the pervasive fear of nothingness, the prospect that I can become ‘not-I’ and emerge as an ‘I’ that I cannot anticipate, is someone who takes anxiety upon himself and affirms himself in spite of it. In the space of facing the meaninglessness of that anxiety, one would return to the task of living in meaning” (Mulryan 2009: 144-145).

<sup>215</sup> To recall, the observed lack of such education is a suggested ethical concern; to review, see suggested ethical consideration 42 in Chapter 7.

aspirational orientation), from ‘gravitation’ to ‘elevation’ and from ‘limits’ to ‘license’. If such metaphors become embedded as new memes or ‘encultured metaphors’ they may assist with nurturing new ‘habits’. They may promote acts of ‘virtuosity’ or ‘moral artistry’, and create an impetus toward a paradigm shift<sup>216</sup> in ethical orientations (Fesmire 1999: 533). Encouraged by the fact that they can approach ethics from the ‘inside’, by making use of their own creative resources, those who see ethics in a negative light (as an imposition or limitation to professional freedom) are more likely to be inspired to engage on their own terms and under their own steam (autonomous moral agency). Such encouragement speaks directly to my fourth and fifth research aims<sup>217</sup>.

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<sup>216</sup> For further exposition regarding the notion of shifting paradigms, and its relation to my personal experiences and the broader context of this study, see Chapter 10, Section 10.1.

<sup>217</sup> To review, see Chapter 1, Section 1.5.5.

## CHAPTER NINE:                    **Communicating a process and *practice* of ethical self enquiry in an ethical way - reflections on the evolution and formulation of the *Performed Narrative* or Trawling Phase 3**

In this chapter I will share and reflect on a number of issues that might be described as ethical considerations pertaining directly to research ethics and which might conventionally be presented in the first chapter of a dissertation<sup>218</sup>. In Chapter One I positioned the composition of the *Performed Narrative* as Research Phase 3, because choices pertaining to structure, style and the inclusion or exclusion of material formed part of my ongoing education in ethics. The various drafts of the narrative were like *rehearsals* where I tested, and was tested by, my evolving understanding of ethics - and I came to refer to them as such.

Here I will share a diversity of issues that posed personal challenges when it came to formulating the *Performed Narrative*. In the context of this study, personal challenges and ethical challenges are not divisible because of the emphasis I have personally placed (or discovered) throughout this enquiry on virtue-based, intuitionist and situationist ethics, as well as the relation between ethics and identity discussed throughout this narrative. As I mentioned in Chapter One: “Ethical rigour is no less than a form of rigorous (self) research practice”. The challenges I describe and explore may be confronted by anyone engaging in a process and practice of ethical self enquiry. In this sense what follows are navigational markers or co-ordinates that may serve to brief and prepare potential explorers of the ‘ethical tensions of license and limits in drama, theatre and performance education’; or ‘serious play’.

### 9.1      **Navigating the ethics of a *Performed Narrative*: licence and limits**

To begin with, confronting ethics in performance and its education (or any field, discipline or industry) from the perspective of an ‘insider’ paradoxically implies a certain disavowing of, and breaking with, the culture. Identity is irrevocably intertwined with the culture in which it resides:

Western thinking has traditionally viewed human beings as unitary, coherent and autonomous individuals who are separate and separable from social relations and organizations. Post-structuralist approaches have criticized this perspective for its dualistic tendency artificially to separate individual from society, mind from body, rationality from emotion. Rejecting such dichotomies and the essentialist notions of personality that tend to underpin them, poststructuralist perspectives suggest that

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<sup>218</sup> Owing to the nature of this study, where the methodologies utilised were often discovered en route, and due to the positioning of the formulation and writing of the *Performed Narrative* as a research phase in its own right, many of these ethical considerations were unanticipated, only becoming clear during the course of writing. As positioned in Chapter 1, it is for this reason that they are included here as part of the reflections on Trawling Phase 3. To review, see Chapter 1, section 1.4: point 4.

people's lives are inextricably interwoven with the social world around them. Since people are embedded in social relations from birth and throughout their lives, 'society' and 'individual' cannot be separated. Accordingly, individuals are best understood as 'social selves' whose actions have to be understood within their complex conditions, processes and consequences (Collinson 2003: 527-528).

It makes sense then that as my investigation progressed I became increasingly aware of the danger of the complexities and consequences associated with aligning myself with a new 'anti' culture. What I mean by this, is that where I once associated myself with the culture of performance, questioning its nature and practices raised significant existential issues, even a sense of crisis at times.

Our need to belong is strong; and it is not considered wise to 'bite the hand that feeds you'. To step away requires having something other to step towards, or else to be left dangling - perhaps even to find oneself falling and dis-coordinated in time and space. In the orientations of contributors such as Seton lie the potential for the formation of a new 'seed' culture, to which I realised I could comfortably ascribe and lend my support toward. This would be an oppositional culture in the making. However, I realised that particularly with regard to this process of ethical self enquiry, such a potential was not necessarily useful or desirable for me. A shift from one paradigm to another might be viewed simply as changing the set or scenery, without addressing requisite changes in the constitution of the inner self or ethical character. This tendency towards a 'set-change' was something I tried to consciously remain aware of and resist as my research unfolded. But in order to do so, I found that I had to become accustomed to inhabiting a state of disorientation and tapping deeply situated inner resources to maintain equilibrium.

As the strength of my inner fortitude grew, I began increasingly to explore the possibility that *if* a new culture should be formed through the dissolution of an old orientation, it should be firmly founded on personal power, self-motivated responsibility and accountability: *personal sovereignty* or autonomous moral agency. I slowly founds ways to recognise and articulate the underlying sense that I had been holding from the outset of this study - the activation or enhancement of "conscience" over "conformity" as a measure of ethical maturation or evolution and growth (Matousek 2011: 82). Servility and conformity have been past patterns of mine and were in many respects what made me vulnerable to various abuses in my experiences within performance and its education. Reviewing literature, and reading and re-reading, structuring and organising the *Performed Narrative* - choosing what to include and what to omit - assisted me to recognise that part of my learning curve has involved confronting that conformity and servility are potential deficits in my ethical character or constitution.

The fact that it has taken me twenty years to finally come forward with reservations regarding contentious and possibly unethical conduct and practices illustrates this clearly. I have had questions, but have never had the courage to speak out publicly. To do so requires being sure about where you stand and having the courage to break with the 'family'. I believe this to be a challenge any

performance educator who wishes to question ethics may face, in lieu of clear definitions and the strong possibility that he or she may encounter resistance from peers who may be swept forth in their busy schedules by the momentums of habit and historical norms.

How much we're willing to dissemble, or even lie, when the majority are pulling in a direction we don't agree with determines how morally sound we are. In obvious and subtle ways, our characters are tested every day in this tension between conformism and conscience (Matousek 2011: 82).

Eugenio Barba (1988: 17) suggests that "[a] form of being requires the invention of a personal tradition". With regard to my intentions in conducting this process of ethical self enquiry, it is exactly such a "personal tradition" that I was seeking and which I propose fellow educators should also seek. As a demonstration of the process of ethical self enquiry I undertook to extract tacit ethical knowledge and experience, the space this *Performed Narrative* has offered for the discovery of my personal voice has proved invaluable. It has allowed me to express and observe my "personal tradition" in action, unfolding in written form; largely free from influences and opposing points of view. Naturally, such a vacuum is not how things work in reality.

In the *Performed Narrative*, and the process of ethical self enquiry as a whole, there is no "live ammunition" (Levy 1997: 66) coming at me. However, this is precisely part of its purpose. A space to express ourselves without fear of judgement is necessary. As I worked however, I was aware of the danger implied by such seclusion and I constantly sought ways to address the fact that once the *rehearsal* (research and preparation of this narrative) was over I would have to be prepared to confront the opinions of others. The dissertation as a *Performed Narrative* would eventually become general knowledge, this publication now being read by others. I employed exercises<sup>219</sup> along the way to prepare for such an eventuality, and as I wrote I constantly challenged myself to be prepared to 'walk the talk'; in the same way that I expect fellow educators who engage such a process of ethical self enquiry will eventually have to be prepared to engage in dialogue and possibly defend their value positions, personal ethos or 'personal tradition'. It seems prudent to anticipate this throughout a process of ethical self enquiry and to keep the 'other' in mind at all times - as an anticipated referent for, and to, the self. This relates once more to the "response of the other" offered by Fesmire (2003: 119) and discussed in the previous chapter.

Another potential pitfall I encountered was that sharing my experiences might easily become a crusade, or perhaps even worse turn me into a martyr of me. I had to be vigilant of my inner narcissist. All of us have narcissistic tendencies, and in fact a dose of narcissism can be considered part of a healthy and functional ego (Pinsky and Young 2010: 89). However, this tendency must be balanced with humility and empathy for it to remain a constructive force. In the face of threats to my identity as

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<sup>219</sup> To review, see in particular Improvisation #5 in Chapter 5, section 5.1.2.



I deconstructed the culture which has in part shaped me, it was tempting at times to attach to a new and more ‘noble’ character, and play the role of Christ versus Judas. This would have been infinitely more gratifying and appealing. But what I really had to watch out for is that even Judas might have sufficed:

Being the object of dramatic attention becomes the narcissist’s primary goal. That’s why tabloid celebrities don’t care whether they’re famous for being crazy, or sick, or almost dead. All that matters is that the audience keeps watching (Pinsky and Young 2010: 105-106).

My roots are in theatre and performance, and as discussed previously theatrical discourse is rife with metaphors likening the performer to a social sacrifice in the name of art and public service (Kumiega 1987, Harrop 1992), or labelling the actor as an egoist or narcissist (Fenichel 1960, Bergler 1960, Schyberg and Carlson III 1962, Kaplan 1966 and 1969, Bates 1987, Harrop 1992, Walsh Bowers 2006, Lingo and Tepper 2013)<sup>220</sup>. One of the characters in my inner ensemble certainly evidenced an attitude of: “Well, if this is all going to be ‘torn open’ then I might as well be recognised for it”. The memes of martyrship and narcissism have been touched on previously<sup>221</sup> because they are of ethical import to discussions centring on the culture of performance and its education; but what is most significant to note with regard to the *Performed Narrative* is that such temptation is something I felt I had to actively and consciously work towards avoiding. It stands to reason that fellow educators might benefit from a word of caution based on my personal experience in this regard.

Similarly, presenting this dissertation as a *Performed Narrative* also raised concerns about whether my opinions would come across as all-knowing, vain and conceited, arrogant or superior in some way. In autoethnographic methods, “the researcher is the epistemological and ontological nexus upon which the research process turns” (Spry 2001: 711). The coherency of this *Performed Narrative* must by necessity, then, depend on me; I am ultimately the centrifuge that holds it all together. Again this undeniably holds a strongly narcissistic potential. Campbell addresses this issue directly when she discusses how the contemporary “narrative turn” in “the production, consumption and academicization” of “auto/biographical” work has been criticized as throwing a self-centred or narcissistic shadow (2010: 24). She counters such resistance by drawing support for “auto/biography” as a “technology of the self” in the Foucauldian sense; she situates auto/biography as “a project of aesthetic inscription and ethical (self)formation” (Campbell 2010: 24). In her view, engaging in the reading and writing of “auto/biography” shapes new formations of ethical relation between self and others, and thus it is never simply a matter of self aggrandisement (2010: 24). I had to remind myself that while this process of documentation is about my experiences and viewpoints, and has import for me, it is simultaneously a mechanism being used to penetrate a territory of relevance for others. I draw encouragement in this regard from Chambers’ (2004) observation that: “Researchers situating their

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<sup>220</sup> See again *Parable* 14 and suggested ethical consideration 69 in Chapter 7.

<sup>221</sup> To review, see Chapter 4, section 4.2.6, and Chapter 5, section 5.2.1 respectively.

research questions in their living inquiry are engaged in ‘research that matters *to* them but that also matters *for* others’” (in Sinner et al. 2006: 1238).

Another fear I had to confront was recognising my own voice as an authoritative one. Is my experience valid? Do I have the right to express my sincere opinion based on my lived or embodied experiences? Or more accurately: can exposition of my embodied experience constitute a valid contribution to the discussion of ethics in performance and its education? And are the ethical concerns I identify more than personally valid? In the sense of trusting the validity of ethical concerns they might, identify within their own practice and in the habitus of performance and its education, any educator would have to confront such questions. To some extent I believe this voice was my inner critic or ‘naysayer’ speaking - the counterpoint to my inner narcissist. Referencing an interpretation of the writings of George Devereux by Ruth Behar, Spry (2001: 711) affirms the relevance of revealing the inner workings of the observer with regard to understanding what has been observed. Griggs (2001: 25) describes narrative research as a “method of teacher research” and specifically “teacher self-research”. He supports this by quoting Connelly and Clandinin (1988) who suggest that such research practice “provides us with a reminder that it is more important to understand what people *experience* than to focus on simply what they *do*”<sup>222</sup>. In my understanding then that the process of observing and relating my shifting inner landscape of feelings, moods and thoughts, and thus my *experiences* as I negotiate the territory of ethics, constitutes a valid research contribution - especially when at present there are so few voices speaking about ethics. And orientations that support the validity of subjective experiences also grant credibility to personally identified ethical concerns as having a more general value to offer the greater habitus of performance and its education.

This study has been a process of self-education on many levels; most obviously it has involved an upskilling in ethics in general, and also how general ethics relates to drama, theatre and performance education. What I have touched on less obviously is that it has equally been a process of becoming more fluent and competent in utilising the various research practices and methods I have either deliberately and consciously, or intuitively, employed. My academic experience up until the time of engaging this study has been biased in favour of - I might even go so far as to say been pressured towards - conformance to scholarly conventions that have not tolerated or allowed for creative expression or the exposition of personal orientations, emotions and opinions. Years of remaining servile to such prescriptions called me again and again to be courageous in the presentation of this *Performed Narrative*. This process has, in my view, been as much of an ethical maturation as any other.

In the final chapter I will speak of a paradigm shift, or a shift in consciousness, that touches the territories of ethics and education; I have already referenced new orientations in education in general

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<sup>222</sup> Emphases in original.

that call for more integral approaches that emphasise educating the ‘whole’ person<sup>223</sup>. The process of identifying my personal ethos was indivisible from finding ways to articulate it within a frame that has previously offered me what I would term resistance, much of which has been overt and dogmatic. Twenty years of ‘silence’ regarding ethical concerns within performance and its education was simultaneously twenty years of ‘silence’ regarding a perceived/experienced lack of academic ‘freedom’. Many of the methodologies employed in this study owe their origin to addressing the subjugation of alternative ‘ways of knowing’ in the academy (Hogan 2008, Klein 2010, Barone and Eisner 2012, Richards 2012)<sup>224</sup>. As an artist, I have never felt safe, comfortable or courageous enough to make a stand for my unique ways of knowing (*resources*) and/or to assert their relevance and credibility. Thus, in neither the context of performance and its education nor the academy have I ever felt ‘whole’, or experienced being treated as such. Trusting the validity of my experiences, valuing my strengths as an artist within the academic frame with regard to research practices and methods, and offering my personal findings as credible research contributions have been challenging. Arriving at the *Performed Narrative* was a process that worked in tandem with speaking out regarding ethical concerns in performance and its education and as such it has effectively come to symbolise a unification of ethics and research for me: a movement toward, and in, ‘wholeness’.

During the course of preparing to embark on this study a peer suggested to me that ethics is challenging because it begs the critical question of “who is pure and virtuous enough to speak on behalf of others, or judge what is right or wrong?” I had to deeply question and understand why - under steam of what inner motivations, drives and desires - I was taking it upon myself to enter this territory, and on what basis. Matousek (2011: 119) suggests that “gnawing at the desire to be good is the temptation to be obscenely self-serving”. Furthermore, the desire to be ‘good’ can itself be self-serving; it can certainly have ulterior self-aggrandising and narcissistic motives such as the desire to elevate the self to a position of superiority over the other. ‘Who is pure and virtuous enough?’ is a difficult question and indicative of the complexity of ethics. Is it the lessor offence to refrain in humility, or to act in arrogance from a misbegotten sense of purity? Such are the sticky questions ethics asks one to confront, and there are no easy answers. But it is in *trying* to answer them that we give ourselves something valid to work with, since we are then activating our conscious engagement with the territory.

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<sup>223</sup> See Chapter 4, section 4.2.3. Review also suggested ethical consideration 35 in Chapter 7.

<sup>224</sup> “[M]atters of meaning are shaped - that is, enhanced and constrained - by the tools we use. When those tools limit what is expressible or representational, a certain price is paid for the neglect of what has been omitted” (Barone and Eisner 2012: 1-2). “Beliefs about what constitutes legitimate research procedure have enormous ramifications for understanding human behavior and social interaction. The gold standard [...] identifies the experiment as the summum bonum of research method. [...] Such research methods have given us a great deal, but are far from the whole story. The need to provide methodological permission for people to innovate with the methods they use has never been more important. Yet, so much of what is prescribed leads to reduction in methodological innovation, rather than an expansion” (Barone and Eisner 2012: 2).

Navigating the presentation of this *Performed Narrative* helped me to recognise that ethical issues are embedded in every move we make on a daily basis. Observing our personal ethos in action so that we might improve our pedagogical practice means we have to place ethical considerations and contemplation at the forefront of our awareness; a form of ethical mindfulness<sup>225</sup> needs to develop. Wittgenstein (1968) argues that “understanding necessarily implicates what people ‘do’, in the broadest sense of that word” (in Orr 2002: 492), and thus it is critical to move beyond intellectual affirmations of beliefs, values and ideas and into lived/embodied demonstrations of them. In other words, through deep and ongoing observation of, and critical/reflective oscillation between, what we think, say and do. To illustrate this, Orr (2002: 492) provides an example of students who might “intellectually affirm anti-essentialism” and yet proceed in their daily function “as if essentialism were true, clinging on non-intellectual levels to reified ideas of self and others”. Clearly, she points out, such students do not “fully understand anti-essentialism.”

I believe it is our responsibility as educators to ‘walk the talk’, to live and embody the ethics we espouse. Erhard and Jensen suggest that: “Morality, Ethics and Legality are part of your word by your mere presence” (2009: 33), and so developing ethical rigour is a form of ongoing research where we are constantly appraising our choices in “relation to the good” (Brinkman 2008: 411). When I began this research I was focussed primarily on finding ethical concerns within performance education associated specifically with imparting the skills of performance and the impacts of certain practices. But the compass of performance education in a tertiary institution extends beyond this.

Ethics in one area or context is interconnected with all the others. In a department of a University, for example, there are ethical concerns that have to do not only with the craft of performance but with its administration, and ethical orientations interconnect them. The institution has an ethical relation and responsibility to society. The department has an ethical responsibility to its students and staff. Is it enough to say that what applies in one circumstance applies to all the others? Ideally, the ethical stance a department takes should speak to all of the contexts which constitute its inner workings as well as to the external systems to which it is affiliated. Ethics aims at seeking continuity<sup>226</sup> in order to promote

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<sup>225</sup> Orr argues for the use of mindfulness techniques to “enhance the goals of critical anti-oppressive pedagogy” (2002: 494). She suggests that through meditation and mindfulness practices, students and educators alike are able to “develop an awareness of the corporeal and emotional responses that accompany ideas, opening up the possibility to more completely address their effects [on, *sic.*] their lives” (2002: 492). She orientates mindfulness in relation to contemporary researcher and teacher Jon Kabat-Zinn’s (2002) description which encompasses diverse forms of meditation as: “a particular way of paying attention, one that gives rise to a moment-to-moment, non-judging awareness” (in Orr 2002: 488). Mindfulness practices are situated in her thesis as “a set of non-denominational techniques that aim to increase and clarify awareness of experience undistorted by such things as the preconceptions, biases, and conditioning that are internalized [sic] as one learns to participate in language-games” (Orr 2002: 488). Present-centredness and mindfulness practices and conceptualisations in performance training formed a central theme in my Masters (2010).

<sup>226</sup> By ‘continuity’ I am referring to how ethics is understood and approached, and not necessarily in terms of conformity to a set of repeatable rules that are imposed without taking the situational dynamics and individuals involved into account.

justice and fairness, equality and effective co-habitation. This permeates down from the social, to the institutional, to the departmental, to the curricular and ultimately to the personal level.

For example: to refrain in my writing from presenting a “master narrative”<sup>227</sup> (Barone and Eisner 2012: 134) and dictating right and wrong is not an issue that pertains only to social or institutional research ethics, but to my personal and interpersonal behaviour in class with students. Do I dominate the situation and demand their submission? Do I claim authority and perpetuate a top-down educative model, or stand on a level with them as equivalent partners (with different roles to play) in the act of learning? If I In-vert<sup>228</sup> this issue, where within myself do I find a single voice in my ensemble of inner characters dictating to the others? In what ways might such a defensive or overly rigid or dogmatic strategy limit or corrupt my ethical integrity and curb my moral maturation/evolution?

In the context of presenting this *Performed Narrative* I am not just an educator analysing the ethicality of my practice; I am also a student who is still in the process of studying. I am thus subject to the research ethics of the institution and the academy in general, and simultaneously I am subject to the influences and proclivities of the culture of performance education which are under review in this study. The culture of performance might grant me licenses with regard to freedom of expression, self-realisation and self-interpretation that the ethics of research does not. How do I navigate these tensions with integrity? When might freedom of expression, self-realisation and self-interpretation become counterproductive - even abusive? What are the ethical and personal implications of promoting such licenses (as memes that might delineate, describe or shape the culture of performance and its education) in the studio/rehearsal room and in the drama culture in general? In what ways might too much freedom of expression, self-realisation and self-interpretation impact my ethical or moral character?<sup>229</sup>

I carried such questions with me throughout the creation of this *Performed Narrative*. In early *rehearsals* (drafts) I included vast sections of excerpts from my *Ethics Evolutions Journal*, *Personal Ethics Questionnaire* and *Narrative of Personal Ethics*. With each subsequent revision I removed more and more of this content; to the extent that almost all of this work is now embedded in the final

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<sup>227</sup> An inherent danger in ethical research of any kind, especially where studies may have political implications, is falling prey to presenting a “master narrative” (Barone and Eisner 2012: 134) - presenting a conclusive, authoritative or dominant point of view - driven by an ideological agenda. Barone and Eisner recommend that in order to avoid such pitfalls the researcher must remain a writer versus becoming an author, approaching the task as a (self) discovery and remaining always willing to “be educated - indeed to be transformed - in that process” (2012: 134).

<sup>228</sup> For many years I have used In-version - a personal reflection technique with a strong ethical orientation - which effectively challenges you to consider where external phenomena reside or evidence within the self. “In-version speaks to the idea that as humans we are inside-out and upside-down and it refers to: ‘The inner version of outer phenomena’. In-version states that what you perceive, you on some level are” (Prigge 2013: 19-20).

<sup>229</sup> Brinkman (2008: 416) suggests that “many social arenas from family life to education and work today are organized in accordance with a self-interpretation stressing self-realization,” and that while there are positive sides to such focuses, “the downside is a ‘corrosion of character’, a lack of a sense of belonging, a growing threat of being useless, and a reduction of loyalty and informal trust”.

product as reflections and realisations, and is itself entirely invisible to the audience. This is similar in process to how preparatory improvisations for a dance or theatrical work are used to originate vocabulary or material, but are themselves excluded from the final product. Matsuba and Walker (1982: 479) describe the ability to manage and regulate self-expression particularly with regard to emotions as critical to the process of developing moral agency or autonomy: “[T]he abilities to be aware of one's feelings but to express them appropriately in sometimes trying circumstances (by transforming or suppressing them) is predictive of moral maturity, whereas the mishandling and repression of emotions seemingly interfere with what is vital to foster moral rethinking and development”.

The *Performed Narrative* granted me the freedom to discover and freely express my voice, but as my ethical maturation process unfolded it also became a means whereby I learnt to use it more proficiently - and in so doing, I believe, more ethically. In early *rehearsals* I needed to purge myself and vent my opinions and feelings about performance and its education without censorship; in many instances this involved discovering these feelings for the first time. However, subsequent revisions drew my emphasis more and more to the universal level, to the act of demonstrating a *process* and *practice* of ethical self enquiry that may have greater utility to others versus simply ‘trumpeting’ my personal views. These different *rehearsals* effectively came to represent different voices of my inner ensemble. Drawing attention to and exposing this struggle with my inner contradictions or the tensions between divergent inner agendas during the course of writing, will hopefully allow readers to “feel/sense the fractures in their own communicative lives” and open up a possibility for the creation of “efficacy and healing in their own communal lives” (Spry 2001: 712).

Increasingly I began to limit my own judgements, to refrain in so far as I could from prescribing what *I* might believe are ethical concerns and focus more on the mechanisms (practices, tasks, exercises) whereby other educators might discover their own views without being explicitly or implicitly influenced by my opinions. I might describe this as a process of transcending the limitations of my own ego. In *Moral Reasoning in the Context of Ego Functioning* (1982) Matsuba and Walker promote an integration of moral cognition with personality and self-identity. They differentiate between coping and defensive ego strategies. Coping strategies indicate a willingness to confront the need for plasticity, change and growth:

Characteristics of the coping processes include: intellectual honesty, flexibility, effective problem-solving, openness to new ideas, a recognition of the limitations and weaknesses in one's own thinking and behavior, an ability to consider different aspects of conflictual situations (both self's and others' interests), responsiveness and sensitivity to others' thoughts and feelings, appropriate expression of affect, and personal integrity. The defending processes, on the other hand, are characterized by: intellectual deception and denial, rigidity and compulsion, the tendency to ignore or distort aspects of a problem (both one's own and others' perspectives), evasion of responsibility, misattribution of guilt, insensitivity, mishandling of emotions, and



immaturity. The facilitatory effect of coping ego processes for moral functioning should be readily apparent from this description, as well as the constraining and corrupting effects of defending processes (1982: 467).

I gleaned much insight into the particular notion of transcendence being discussed here from Lombardo's understanding that "self-actualizing people experience growth as a consequence of meeting challenges and dedicating themselves to something more than their own self-aggrandizement" (2011b: 353). Lombardo also references contemporary positive psychologist Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi's (1993) proposal for a new vision of the self - an "evolving self" - for the new millennium which:

[E]mphasizes the need to transcend the egocentric constraints within us. [...] [T]ranscendence stretches the boundaries of the ego and expands consciousness; it is a necessary condition for a holistic and integrative perspective on reality. This level of consciousness is a key dimension of an educated mind - a mind that can see beyond the immediate here and now (2011a: 37).

As I rehearsed this *Performed Narrative* and stripped away more and more material that was bound up in my own selfish need to be heard and aggrandise my own opinion, I recognised that somehow a burden was simultaneously being lifted from me. I had an increasing feeling of lightness or levity which, upon careful contemplation, I recognised may be associated with forgiveness and perhaps even (in Toltec terms) a restoration of lost energy or the healing of energetic damage I had sustained at the hands of others, or inflicted on others, in past experiences. McTaggart (2011: 203) counterpoints writer Geiko Muller-Fahrenholz's (1989) understanding of forgiveness as a "mutual bondage" with Hannah Arendt's understanding of forgiveness as a "constant mutual release" (in McTaggart 2011: 203). This resonates strongly with my felt experience of increased levity as this process of revising or *rehearsing* my *Performed Narrative* progressed.

#### 9.1.1 Improvisation #6: Superimposing Research Ethics over pedagogical practice

Faced with a similar lack of clearly articulated ethical codes or frameworks governing performance and its education in Australia, Seton drew on definitions outlined in the Australian *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (NHRMC/AVCC 2007) as "a useful point of reference for considering how both industry practices and training practices might require ethical review and renovation" (2010: 6). He quotes from the *Statement* and replaces the word 'research' (by placing this in parentheses) with the word 'training' to offer what I believe is a creative demonstration of how codes governing research ethics might be used as a resource for stimulating a process of delineating ethical codes in drama, theatre and performance education (2010: 7).

As mentioned in the previous sub-section, the *Performed Narrative* has effectively come to symbolise for me a unification of ethics and research, and as a means to explore this growing relationship more



deeply, I engaged in a creative exercise that mirrors the example set by Seton. I observed ‘markers’ that identify research as ‘high risk’ in Stellenbosch University’s research ethics guidelines as stipulated in *Getting Ethics Approval for Your Research Project* (Horn et al. 2015). Following Seton’s lead, I will substitute the word ‘training’ for ‘research’ in selected extracts to follow. In this document, “high risk” is defined as: “Training/(research) in which there is real and foreseeable risk of harm and discomfort, and which may lead to serious adverse consequences if not managed in a responsible manner” (Horn et al. 2015: Section 7, n.p.). This speaks directly to the most basic ethical concerns or the “psychological hazards” (Brandfonbrener 1992: 101) of performance and its education, as observed in Chapter One. In such cases, one or more of the following criteria apply:

- Training/(research) involving highly sensitive topics [...].
- Training/(research) involving the deception of the participants.
- Training/(research) in which those agreeing to participate will be placed at real risk of harm.
- Training/(research) that requires action on the part of the trainer/(researcher) that could place the participant or others at risk [...] (adapted from Horn et al. 2015: Section 7, n.p.).

In my capacity as performance educator, what this invites me to consider is in what ways training ‘involves highly sensitive topics’, ‘involves the deception of participants’, ‘places the participants at real risk of harm,’ and places me as an educator in a position where tasks and explorations I deliver might ‘place participants and others at risk’. My personal experience with regard to the above is that performance training (and drama and theatre in general) almost always involves sensitive topics<sup>230</sup>. It often requires deception in the sense that tasks and improvisations are delivered in ways in which outcomes are withheld in order to generate authentic and spontaneous reactions/responses<sup>231</sup>. And there is always risk in the form of exposure to, and immersion in, characters and material that are emotionally and psychologically, and very often physically, challenging and/or dangerous<sup>232</sup>. Students are furthermore often required to explore, expose and express personal material (aspects of their personal lives and history) in training, something which also deemed questionable and risky in research (Horn et al. 2015: Section 7, n.p.)<sup>233</sup>.

A final point worth mentioning from Section 6 of the document is: “Training/(research) in which participants are expected to make substantial sacrifices but where the benefits accruing to society are not clear should be ethically questioned” (Horn et. al 2015: n.p.)<sup>234</sup>. Training and education instances where students are required to ‘make sacrifices’ - for example by: expressing degrading stereotypes, exploring sexual orientations that deviate from their own, expressing opinions and using language that

<sup>230</sup> See *Parables* 6 and 16, and suggested ethical considerations 24 and 27 in Chapter 7.

<sup>231</sup> See *Parables* 3 and 10, and suggested ethical considerations 15 and 32 in Chapter 7.

<sup>232</sup> See *Parables* 3, 4, 10 and 16, and suggested ethical considerations 15, 17, 24 and 27 Chapter 7.

<sup>233</sup> See *Parable* 12, and suggested ethical considerations 16, 17 and 31 in Chapter 7.

<sup>234</sup> See *Parables* 1, 6, 14 and 16 and suggested ethical considerations 5, 11 and 25-28 in Chapter 7.

deviates from their own (blasphemy, swearing, affiliated political or religious views) engaging in behaviours that deviate from their own (drinking alcohol, using drugs, smoking, violence, abusive and degrading actions), or enacting nude or sexual acts onstage - may then be considered highly questionable unless the benefits to society can be deemed clear and valid. Furthermore, staging productions or offering performances that involve exposing the public to questionable social behaviours such as profanity, obscenity, violence and degradation would have to be ethically motivated by the department as a whole, and the risks weighed (and managed appropriately) against overall benefits<sup>235</sup>.

This exercise assisted me to recognise that a ‘good’ researcher should then ultimately also be a ‘good’ (ethical) person. Learning sound research practice can be a form of ethical education in its own right. *If*, I must add, correctly approached, because while there may be value in simply following the rules, I don’t simply mean following set injunctions or mandated codes laid out in research guidelines or as prescribed by research ethics committees. Instead, I recommend taking personal accountability for more deeply understanding the motives behind certain delineations in research ethics and applying them to one’s personal as well as professional life. To be truly effective, I believe that such a manner of ethical education can only be self-motivated and self-regulated. Nevertheless I believe this should be encouraged and endorsed by lecturers and supervisors; it could contribute to fostering and nurturing moral agency versus servile compliance throughout the lecturer/student continuum. I believe lecturers could lead by example (walk the talk) by demonstrating the ethical rigour they apply to their research through transposing this to their studio/rehearsal room practices.

Stewart (2006: 353) defines “a teacher as a teacher 24/7”; according to Van Nuland this means that “a teacher is always a teacher and may be held accountable for in- and out of school behaviours that have an impact on student learning” and/or their role as an employee (2009: 15). My confrontations with research ethics throughout this study bring me to suggest that a researcher (practitioner/lecturer) should likewise be defined as “a researcher 24/7”, and that this orientation might be a useful catalyst toward applying the fundamental principles of research ethics within the context of teaching and learning.

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<sup>235</sup> To review the discussion of ‘character invasion’ and the potential that mirroring persons (real or fictional) with poor ethical/moral character might ‘rub off’, leave a ‘residue’ or influence identity and ethical character, see Chapter 2, section 2.2.4.

## 9.2 Practicing ethical “response-ability”<sup>236</sup> or fictional *Parables* and the *Performed Narrative* as creative replies to ‘unethical’ ethics research

I began this exploration with the intention of sharing accounts of past experiences in which I felt I had suffered a variety of ills or abuse and/or mistreatment due to unethical behaviour or practices within the context of performance and its education, and/or had perpetrated or contributed (consciously or unconsciously) to the abuse or mistreatment of others. It was one of my original intentions to use these narratives as a basis for identifying and discussing ethical concerns. However, when the university research sub-committee came to review my proposal it became clear that such a strategy was untenable and ethically unsound<sup>237</sup>.

In many ethical dilemmas, two core values may oppose one another. Johnson (2012: 248) describes such a situation as a ‘right-versus-right’ dilemma, which I found to be a useful explanation of the circumstance with which I found myself confronted. To tell the truth about my experiences felt to me to be the right thing to do; as a means to position personal experiences as a valid research contribution and to enter into a shared vulnerability with other educators whom I was suggesting should exhibit the courage to interrogate their own practice and experience. Most importantly I anticipated that these narratives would provide tangible examples for modelling and demonstrating a process of ethical self enquiry. However, research ethics demands that the rights of research subjects be respected and recognised. Without the informed consent of those with whom I have shared past experiences (institutions, educators, peers, students, colleagues), I would be contravening research ethics if I were to describe specific situations in my past that hold ethical concern and thereby directly or indirectly incriminate others. Here began what was for me one of the central ethical struggles I faced in this study and which ironically contributed most constructively to the final outcome.

The suggestion made by the research sub-committee was to use fictionalised narratives or hypothetical case studies as a means to avoiding this pitfall. I had already proposed that I would not use names, or reference the dates in various stories I wished to narrate. However, it was suggested that sharing the actual events would still make it too easy to identify institutions and people involved. This set works in motion that resulted in the exploration of fiction in a process of ethical self enquiry. When I finally came to the process of *rehearsing* (drafting) this *Performed Narrative*, however, I discovered that my own voice had disappeared. My intentions to enter into a ‘shared vulnerability’ with fellow educators were short-circuited. I realised that by silencing the ‘other’, the self too becomes mute, because self-

<sup>236</sup> Rossiter 2011: 5. To review this concept, see Chapter 6, section 6.2.3.

<sup>237</sup> “Where people or their behaviour (human behaviour) is chosen as the object of investigation, their right to decent treatment must be respected and in particular their right to privacy, their right to confidentiality of personal information, their right to informed consent and their right to the minimization of risks to which people could be exposed in the research process” (University of Stellenbosch, *Guidelines on Ethical Aspects of Scholarly and Scientific Research*, Instructions of D. Phil. Programme in Drama and Theatre Studies 2013, Addendum C: n.p.).

identity is irrevocably entwined with the identities of others. To illustrate that we are none of us isolated entities, MacIntyre make use of the stage metaphor:

We are never more (and sometimes less) than the co-authors of our own narratives. Only in fantasy do we live what story we please. [...] We enter upon a stage which we did not design and we find ourselves part of an action that was not of our making. Each of us being a main character in his own drama plays subordinate parts in the dramas of others, and each drama constrains the others (1984: 213).

In a certain respect I had vanished into a created mask, and in another respect I found myself speaking to the mask, analysing the mask, deconstructing the mask as if it was truth. The ‘fictionalised narratives’ mechanism became for me analogous with the postmodernism notion of “simulacrum” where a copy or a false mask stands in place of reality (Shalin 2007: 209). In a sense it is simultaneously (and paradoxically) analogous with the pragmatist concept of “dissimulacrum” in which reality pretends to be a fiction or mask (2007: 209). The fictionalised narratives were and were not my truth. As Shalin explains:

A simulator claims something to be there when it is not, a dissimulator pretends that there is nothing when there is something. The former wishes to pass one’s mask for a face, the latter intimates that his is merely a mask. One is busy feigning enthusiasm and constructive activity, while the other rushes to dissemble pesky corporealities overloading the speaker’s emotional circuits. One fakes total presence, the other feigns total absence, and each conceals and suppresses its affective-somatic being. In short, the two are twins: the simulator always dissimulates just as the dissimulator simulates; their’s is a sibling rivalry, the one can hardly do the job without the other, as they continue to pretend that they pretend or that they do not. Culture does not so much lose its body in these exercises as it whittles down its emotionally laden substance and masks its all-too-real affective-somatic deformities (2007: 209).

Because our identities are intertwined with those of others, removing the ‘other’ from my exposition of ethical enquiry left me in a situation where I found that I mysteriously vanished along with them. What remained were ‘islands’ of creative fictionalised accounts surrounded by dry academic discourse. This *Performed Narrative* was birthed and evolved as creative mechanism I felt I needed, in order to allow myself to ‘re-appear’. I felt it was critical to provide a personal account or narrative of the process of engaging with ethical self-enquiry and thereby to grant the reader insight into my biases, struggles, failures and evolution as this study progressed. As mentioned in Chapter One, I felt it would be ethical to do so. Moreover I was certain that my experiences might serve as a route map or example that might inspire and effectively ‘open a way’. I spent more time wrangling with finding ways to navigate the fine line between self exposure and the exposure of others (those inculcated in my historical experience) than on any other issue. I grew extremely frustrated with my attempts to find what British astrophysicist John Gribbin (in Watson 1995: 13) refers to as the ‘Goldilocks Effect’<sup>238</sup>,

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<sup>238</sup> “Goldilocks, remember, was the nursery tale heroine who was also perhaps the earliest recorded squatter. She moved in on the empty home of the Three Bears, trying out their beds, chairs and bowls of porridge until she found the ones that were neither too hard nor too soft, too big nor too small, too hot nor too cold - but just right for her. This rightness is an important idea, one with far-reaching consequences, not just for cosmology but for

the ‘just right’ or ‘just enough’ exposure to demonstrate and share my journey without hurting or harming others.

Defence of free speech is not primarily matter of the rights of the speaker but the rights of the listener. In that sense, we all have the right not only to offend but to be offended. Without it, we are all impoverished and disarmed (Edgar 2006: 76).

Edgar’s article *Shouting fire: art, religion and the right to be offended* (2006) makes an impassioned plea against an increasing censorship of theatre and the arts in contemporary times. He points out that protecting the families of perpetrators from exposure leads to a situation in which the perpetrators themselves may be shielded (2006: 67-68). When I read this article it struck a resonant note for me regarding the quandary of navigating ethical ways to explore and present personal experiences. I resonated strongly with Edgar’s idea that we have a right to both offend and be offended. I finally had to recognise and admit that a part of my ‘fractal’<sup>239</sup> self wanted retribution as a deeply buried or unconscious motivation for embarking on this study in the first place<sup>240</sup>. A certain character in my inner ensemble wanted to offend in return those whom I felt had abused me. To my chagrin I recognised that to some extent my motivations might have been a form of vendetta.

This realisation brought home just how critical it is to identify deeper motivations, whether they are positive or negative, because either might influence motives and thus ethical choices and decisions. The desire to make someone else wrong, or to prove yourself right, might often lead to the ‘right’ decision being made, but it is not necessarily a sound basis from which to operate. In the same way a deeply held acceptance (habit) that practices in performance and its education are unquestionably ‘right’ may lead to a refusal to interrogate issues or revise them when necessary.

Such sharing is both exposing and confessional, but I feel it is necessary. Were it not for the practice of layered and repetitive reflection and review demanded by the formulation of this *Performed Narrative*, I would never have reached such a deeply rooted motive. None of the practices in Trawling Phase 1 had brought me quite so far. Even though I included questions in the *Personal Ethics Questionnaire*<sup>241</sup> in which I interrogated my motives, my answers never reached so deep. This realisation offered me insight into certain attitudinal values I had been holding that cannot be separated from the origin and unfolding of this study, or the identity I had when I began this exploration. Here I found a ‘darker’ and completely unconscious root for why I wanted to tell my own stories of abuse, shaming and degradation as my initial point of departure. Here I found a deeper

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all of life” (Watson 1995: 13). Biologist Lyall Watson suggests that the ‘Goldilocks Effect’ “informs the kind of moral philosophy Aristotle described as ‘just enough’. Not too much or not too little, but just enough of the right stuff, the kind of stuff that makes for good ecology” (1995: 141).

<sup>239</sup> Marks-Tarlow 2010: 31.

<sup>240</sup> This is not to undermine other more ‘positive’ intentions I have consciously held, such as a deep desire to alleviate the distress of others and create more safety in the habitus of performance and its education.

<sup>241</sup> See Addendum 1, questions 1- 6.

understanding for why both ‘The Memo’ and my guiding research question suggest an emphasis on problems and on ethical concerns and misconduct. Here I found a partial answer to why the resulting process of ethical self enquiry I undertook (Trawling Phase 1) had been ‘mired’ in the negative.

If other educators were to receive ‘The Memo’ as an exercise, or take up the guiding research question of this study as a prompt toward ‘exploring the ethical tensions of license and limits in Drama, Theatre and Performance education’ they might have a different focus. I came to recognise that the issue resides not so much with the exercise or the question, but with interpretation. And interpretation rests on attitudinal values that may need to be unearthed and confronted in search of greater sobriety and objectivity. In the previous section I quoted Matousek who said that “gnawing at the desire to be good is the temptation to be obscenely self-serving” (2011: 119). This realisation truly brought the reality of this potential home to roost. It illuminated for me the importance of balance in any process of ethical self enquiry and also in any process of investigating ethical shortcomings in general. This is not to say that my guiding research question was ‘wrong’ or that the task set in ‘The Memo’ was ‘wrong’ per se.

Research may often seek ‘failures’, focus on ‘what isn’t working’ and emphasise critique. But it may have been useful and beneficial (thus ‘good’ or ethical in the sense of being fair, just and healthy) to deliberately balance the ‘light’ with the ‘dark’. It may be ‘good’ to generate and offer positive narratives (parables) that evidence and can thus demonstrate and teach sound ethical conduct; examples of ‘getting it right’. To position this in relation to the observation offered by Browning and Boudès (2005: 34) in Chapter Six that “[b]est practice’ efforts in fact rely on the ability to identify *both* past successes and past failures”, this may have been ‘better’ practice. It is something I would now advocate. I can see that had I done so I might have had a very different and perhaps less challenging experience during my process of ethical self enquiry. As mentioned in Chapter Four, in my self-interview process I did actually include a question to draw forth instances of where I had implemented strategies in my career as an educator to address ethical concerns<sup>242</sup>. Nevertheless, even here my emphasis remained critical.

I believe there is value in such confession and exposure because this revelation empowers me to encourage others to dig deep and to struggle if necessary; to embrace the possibility that it might hurt to raise certain motivations and intentions to consciousness. It might well onset existential crisis and dis-ease. The ‘self’ may have to be confronted, de- and then re-composed. As a research phase and practice the formulation of the *Performed Narrative* thus went beyond simply ‘rehearsing’ ‘*what to say and how to say it*’, because in doing so I was ‘rehearsing’ (*practicing*) myself (ethical character and identity) “in relation to the good” (Brinkman 2008: 411).

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<sup>242</sup> To review, see Section 4.3. See also Addendum 1, question 3.



Finding myself facing the potential of going unheard despite the potential of making a great deal of academic noise during this study, stirred and activated deeply held unconscious feelings and made me feel cheated and undermined. It struck a deep nerve that is for me central to understanding the forces that predisposed me toward performance in the first place, and which are the same forces that later made me vulnerable to abuse in the context of performance and its education. It activated my deep desire to be recognised and affirmed which is why I was attracted to the stage and screen to begin with. I experienced moments, as I tried to find the balance between exposure and insignificance, where I really was disgruntled with the nature of academic research and writing. However, as the idea of the *Performed Narrative* emerged and coalesced through editing and revision of early *rehearsals*, I became increasingly grateful for this challenge and for revelation borne of struggle.

Both artists and moral thinkers struggle to discover forms that will effect a controlled transformation from old ways of thinking and feeling to new ways. This struggle yields expressive forms - as opposed to blind, wasteful spasms - that redefine our world. Artistic investigation is an expressive activity through which the artist struggles to configure emotions, desires, images, and the like. Analogously, moral agents strive to act in ways that coherently express their overall moral characters rather than blindly giving way to a fleeting albeit terrifyingly powerful impulsion (Fesmire 1999: 544).

I can now appreciate that the ethical limitations imposed on this research actually prevented me from turning this entire study into a 'victim journal' in which I would simply have been 'whining' about historical slights. By degrees and in stages this challenge forced me to incrementally work through my issues and unexpressed emotions. It asked me to elevate the discussion from unconsciousness to consciousness; and in this regard the creation of the *Parables* and the *Performed Narrative* played a central and important role. Telling my story of ethical self enquiry allowed me to re-emerge on the other side of a process that in certain respects had started to feel like a defacement. It was in this search for, and the discovery of, ways to navigate the tensions between self exposure and the concomitant exposure of others, or through expansive thinking and creative problem solving, that I began to find my voice once more; but it was a more (ethically) mature and emergent (evolving personal ethos) voice.

### **9.3 Practicing ethical 'virtuosity' or 'parables in action'**

Exploring the ethical tensions between the license and limits of exhibition and inhibition, demanded that I confront the complexity of ethics and fostered a deep realisation of the fact that, as an artist and educator, simply having the courage to put myself on the line is not in and of itself enough to demonstrate sound research *or* validate something as a work of art. The audience and everyone else

involved must be respected in accounts of self-expression as well as in ethical/moral acts<sup>243</sup>. While the desire to express ourselves and speak our truth may be a personal choice or the claiming of a certain license, we are interrelated with others and nothing happens in a vacuum; in keeping with a situationist approach to ethics there must be (contextual) limits.

After the first ‘stagger through’ of this *Performed Narrative* (completed draft 1), my supervisor suggested I reframe the fictionalised narratives or hypothetical case studies as *Parables* or ‘teaching stories’. This positioning situated me once again in the role of educator versus slighted student and assisted greatly with helping me to identify what this study was really all about: demonstrating and performing a process and practice of ethical self enquiry.

I offer the following observations to frame the creation and sharing of my ‘stories’ of questionable ethical conduct (*Parables*) and the evolution of the *Performed Narrative* in relation to Fesmire’s (1999: 544) comparison between artists and moral thinkers in the previous section:

- the practice of creating the *Parables*, and the evolution of the *Performed Narrative* as an autoethnographic account of a process and practice of ethical self enquiry, evidence a “controlled transformation from old ways of thinking and feeling to new ways”;
- these innovations allowed for the creation of “expressive forms - as opposed to blind, wasteful spasms” that may hold the potential to contribute to redefining the world of performance and its education;
- the *Parables* and the *Performed Narrative* allowed me to “express” my overall moral character “rather than blindly giving way to a fleeting albeit terrifyingly powerful impulsion”.

Because the practice of creating the *Parables* called me to elevate my memories from the murky regions of past experience to a more aesthetically rich and useful form, and the *Performed Narrative* has allowed me to approach academic writing and research in an artistic manner that merges form and content and emphasises process over product, they literally and symbolically represent the raising of my personal consciousness through engaging in this study. Instead of only making answer to my guiding question through the sharing and analysis of a list or inventory of ethical concerns as I originally anticipated I would, the value of the *practice* of creating the *Parables* and the overall process and practice ethical self enquiry became foregrounded. The use of artistry is hereby highlighted in a process and practice of ethical self enquiry as an interpretive (ethical deliberation) mechanism in its own right. The choices I was confronted with making when formulating and composing this *Performed Narrative* were simultaneously aesthetic (artistic) and ethical.

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<sup>243</sup> This echoes once more Fesmire’s “response of the other” which signifies the fact that a moral act is subject to communal evaluation and that few deeds happen in isolation (2003: 118). The ‘other’ is the audience and art critic whose perspective must be accounted for in each decision made. Audience expectations and projected reactions should inform deliberation regarding proposed actions and choices.

In the devising and sharing of these practices my voice is still present. Even while it may be ‘elevated’ to the level of artistry it remains invisibly rooted in the raw and base motives and authentic drives and impulses that drew me to this work in the first place - my ‘vendetta’ as a now conscientised motivation included. The practice of creating the *Parables* and devising the *Performed Narrative* as *creative replies to ‘unethical’ ethics research* were discoveries imposed on me by the context and constraints of research ethics, but also arose as a result of my own quest (towards autonomous moral agency) to find ethical ways to share narratives of enquiry into ethically contentious practices and behaviour.

The *practice* of creating the *Parables*, and the *Performed Narrative* as an overarching *practice* (an ongoing and conscientious personal and professional ethical engagement), have thus come to represent a ‘Goldilocks solution’ that directly and clearly consolidates my understanding, and demonstrates my comprehension of Fesmire’s (1999, 2003) *morality as art* metaphor, as well as my own metaphor of *serious play*. Such recognition solves many of my tensions between the license and limits of exposure and non-disclosure, of inhibition and exhibition, and of the private and the public. It also concretises the intersection of the tandem evolution of my ethical knowledge and proficiency in autoethnographic, artistic, performative, arts-based and narrative research practices.

All of this ‘wrangling’ has finally led me to realise that the *Performed Narrative* is a form of parable in its own right. As a demonstration of a process of ethical self enquiry it is a ‘teaching story’. The entire process of ethical self enquiry delineated in this study is an example of ‘virtue in practice’, a means whereby an educator (myself as illustration/example) *does* attempt to raise his (or her) virtuosity and ethical character in a manner that is a demonstration for, and evocation to, others. As such, the *Performed Narrative* exemplifies an ongoing process of review and reflection. It demonstrates how ongoing engagement with ethics may lead to an evolution of knowledge and understandings in a ‘living’ manner. As new orientations and perspectives have arisen, I have attempted to apply them to direct experience; in this particular instance, this refers to the process of formulating the *Performed Narrative* as my endeavour to effectively and ethically express and communicate the ideas and issues this study explores. The *Performed Narrative* represents and demonstrates a *practice* in which ethical ideas and issues are repeatedly and methodically raised to, and held in, consciousness through ongoing reflection and refinement. I believe that through such *practice* the automatic system might be primed to support more virtuous thinking, speaking and acting in daily experience.

Upon reflection then, while Trawling Phase 1 represents an intensive once-off ethical self-research *process*, Trawling Phase 2 and especially Trawling Phase 3 (the *Performed Narrative*) imply an extension of the practices and tools employed in the first phase into lifelong *practices*. While a once-off investigation is certainly a useful starting point and I would definitely encourage others to undergo

such a process, it is not in and of itself sufficient to address the necessary personal changes required within the habitus of performance and its education. Trawling Phase 1 may raise *to* consciousness ethical concerns and assist with the development of necessary codes and frameworks, but it might not sufficiently address the need for a raising *of* consciousness. Because performance and its education is such a dynamic and complex arena, I feel it is imperative that the tools and techniques that Trawling Phase 1 offers and teaches be extended into ‘lived’ practice.

The *Performed Narrative* then embodies and demonstrates all of the exercises and techniques I employed in the process of ethical self enquiry described as Trawling Phase 1: throughout the composition and formulation of this narrative I have continuously engaged with these exercises in techniques in various ways; and this engagement has impacted my personal and professional life as a whole during this time. While composing the *Performed Narrative* I have been working with *memory* to recall and recount as accurately as possible the unfolding of my research. The *Performed Narrative* is a form of *journaling*, of capturing the process I underwent and reflecting on it. Towards the end of my writing the *Performed Narrative* in fact began to merge with and ultimately replaced my journaling practice. Throughout this narrative I have posed ethical questions that have guided my research and also influenced the arrangement of material; this is effectively *self-interview*. This account is a *narrative*. And the whole process of composing this narrative has an aesthetic dimension; it called for making and refining stylistic and structural choices and selecting inclusions and omissions that best demonstrate the process and practice of ethical self enquiry. It is not *fiction*, but it evidences *artistry*. The practice also illustrates the merging of form and content and foregrounds process over product by linking, overlapping and thus to a certain degree merging *performance*, *education*, *ethics* and *research* into an interconnected whole. For the period during which I was engaged with composing this *Performed Narrative*, I was working with these individual exercises and techniques simultaneously and they ultimately merged into a seamless whole, a *practice* - a ‘parable in action’. The title of this *Performed Narrative* is present-centred: ‘exploring’ references an ongoing endeavour as opposed to a retrospective account, ‘artefact’ or a completed work of art or process. This situates a practice of ethical self enquiry as an ongoing, lifelong practice of *serious play*. Describing and reflecting on the composition of the *Performed Narrative* in this manner effectively makes answer to my fifth research aim<sup>244</sup>.

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<sup>244</sup> To review, see Chapter 1, section 1.5.5.

## CHAPTER TEN:                      Debriefing

This *Performed Narrative* began with briefing and appropriately orienting the reader with regard to the ways in which, as a dissertation, it diverges from what might be termed ‘traditional’ expectations and conventions. In a methodologically consistent way, this concluding chapter is positioned as a debriefing. To recall, briefing and debriefing are central ethical concerns that have been identified in drama, theatre and performance education. This process of debriefing is intended for both myself, as the autoethnographer, the primary character/self that has been at the centre of the self-enquiry processes and practices that form the backbone of this *Performed Narrative*, as well as for the reader who may be seeking their own process of integration and resolution now that this exploration draws to a close.

Throughout this narrative I have reflected on the various research practices I engaged, and summative observations and comments were offered at various key moments. Rather than repeating many of the ideas and findings furnished thus far, this Debriefing highlights the emergent questions, suggestions and ideas that have eventuated as a result of my process and practice of ethical self enquiry. The emphasis is thus on looking towards the future and the possibility of improving/enhancing the role of ethics in performance and its education.

### 10.1    The paradigm shift: contextualising ethics in drama, theatre and performance education within the greater systems that surround it

Throughout the research and writing of this *Performed Narrative*, Grotowski’s idea (in Kumiega 1987: 132) that it is through “exposure” that the “personal and the collective converge” (and which was also instrumental in the formulation of many ideas in my Master’s thesis) has lingered<sup>245</sup>. For some reason it resurfaced early in my musings on the topic of ethics, even before clear directions had formulated in my mind. Since then it has grown increasingly persuasive and demanding of attention, like a clap of thunder heard in the distance that slowly rumbles ever nearer until it sweeps over you and sets the very ground to shaking. This quote represents for me a living embodiment of the Grotowski of the past, and almost like a prophecy, it foretells the potential impact of Grotowski on the future. For me it is the absolute core of everything Grotowski stood for, his ultimate legacy, and I believe that it was not only to actors and theatre practitioners that he was speaking when he uttered these words; his statement sums up and provokes reflection and a response to some ineffable remembrance far more deeply buried within the breast of every living human, and as such, his words stand as a challenge for the future generation.

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<sup>245</sup> See Chapter 5, section 5.3, and Chapter 8, section 8.1.

In short, this statement could be said to illustrate my ethical stance, in general, and as I came to orientate myself in relation to this *Performed Narrative*. As I advanced into the territory of this study I discovered I was moving in two directions at once. On the one hand, I immersed myself deeply in personal process work and self-scrutiny, both to recall my own experiences and reflect on them, and also in terms of confronting my own in-built judgments and biases that might limit my ability to identify and articulate suggested ethical issues with clarity and sobriety. Simultaneously as I worked, a counter-current became increasingly apparent. Every step ventured into my inner microcosm led me a step further outward into the greater human macrocosm. The more intimately I focused and framed my own experience into ever more detailed minutiae, so my perceptual lens responded by sympathetically zooming out into the macro-context; a context which began initially with the broader field of drama, theatre and performance education (and industry), but increasingly became more expansive even than this.

It became apparent to me that perhaps Grotowski was not only talking about exposure with regard to acting and performance when he uttered these words, and that he may have been referring to life in general and moreover, what life could or should aspire to be; a view of life and reality that stands available to be gained or reclaimed should we have the courage to investigate, confront and reveal our essential selves to one another. “As above, so below” (Matthews and Matthews 1994: 193)<sup>246</sup>, the ancient maxim goes, or put differently: ‘as within so without’. For me, investigating ethics in drama, theatre and performance education has been about more than its own context alone, because drama is a cornerstone of cultural evolution, past, present and future. Viewed in this light, changes in how we teach and make drama can change the world we live in. Furthermore, any thorough investigation of ethics in drama, theatre and performance education cannot be done in isolation; the greater social systems surrounding performance education and the theatre industry have to be accounted for. It is only by taking these surrounding systems into account that theatre can truly live up to its accepted and desired role of being a force of social reflection, introspection and ultimately transformation.

As a result of the shifts in my understanding and perception that were activated by my process and practice of ethical self-enquiry it is no longer possible for me to conceive of the call to ethics in drama, theatre and performance as anything less than a part of a global trend to pay more diligent attention to ethical considerations. As new understandings of the origins and capabilities of human beings become

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<sup>246</sup> According to Matthews and Matthews (1994: 193) this famous injunction originates from the Emerald Tablet of Hermes and that in its correct interpretation speaks of unity of God within mankind, a fusion or integration between what might be termed physical and metaphysical dimensions of being. Shamanist Kenneth Meadows (2001: 62) speaks of a “complementary system” which “formed part of an ancient wisdom” that was “lost” in antiquity but has now been reclaimed. It looks within ourselves for explanations of what is happening outside ourselves and is based upon the principle of ‘as within, so without’. It effectively sums up the technique of ‘Inversion’ I described in Chapter 9 and which I have employed for several years in my personal practice (see footnotes in Section 9.1 to review). The Wakan Tanka symbol and the Taoist yin and yang symbol of the Tai Chi represent a similar understanding of a singular but polarised source, where each aspect of the duality is “delicately balanced in harmony with the other comprising a dynamic cyclic power of movement and rest which enables force to become form” (Meadows 2001: 92).



apparent, this call is indicative of a growing cognisance of the responsibility newfound recognitions imply with regard to future actions, behaviours and practices. What will we *do* with what we now know about life, the universe and everything? Will we use our expanding consciousness to make more effective, and thus ethical, choices? Specifically, what role might drama, theatre and performance play in supporting the paradigm shift and offering more effective, ethical practices for the relationships between self and other? The call for ethics is certainly in part a response to what might be termed a fragmentation, dissolution or deconstruction of previously rigid cultural, social, spiritual and theological institutions on a global scale. However, it could also simultaneously be seen as a contributing agent to the paradigm shift and indicative of a growing need for new approaches towards making choices in an increasingly complex world. As part of the methodological underpinnings of this enquiry offered in the Briefing (Chapter One) this shift was indicated in an understanding that the artist will increasingly be called upon to practice simultaneously as a scientist, and the scientist as an artist (Ferguson 2005: 121 -129)<sup>247</sup>.

As my own process/research has repeatedly proven to me, it is tempting in the study of ethics to tend towards taking sides; to want to emphasise/highlight only the good, or the bad, the light or the dark. The paradigm shift calls for a new and integral perspective where polarity is harmonised through inclusion<sup>248</sup> versus exclusion. As Bishop (in McTaggart 2011: 192) suggests, “[s]hared meaning [...] allows for different perceptions - or realities - to exist together”. This implies an emphasis on ‘elevation’<sup>249</sup> versus ‘gravitation’. Practising inclusion and elevation means learning to see a context (person, group, act or event) from the perspective of every tree in the wood; in other words the wood *is only a wood* because of multiple perspectives (McTaggart 2011: 173). Such perceptual expansiveness requires a radical increase in consciousness and the ability to embody paradox, ambiguity and contradiction.

The paradigm shift acknowledges the power of reality and the power of dreams simultaneously in an act of super-complex integration. Visionary consciousness writer Marilyn Ferguson (2005: 18) suggests that New Age thinking points to a “kind of realistic idealism”, which is encapsulated in Aristotle’s notion of *eudaimonia*, or as she puts it: “the art and science of leading a rewarding life” (2005: 18). It calls for a new dream with a guiding narrative that takes our humanity and our aspirations into account, our failures and successes, our dark and our light (Novak 2010: 4). Such orientations motivate me to recognise that we need a more inclusive and fluid view of ethics that can simultaneously honour, as well as transform and transcend, individual perspectives. “Instead of thinking of ethics - of good and bad - as static and dogmatic, we should see ethics as growing and self-

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<sup>247</sup> To review, see Section 1.6.3.

<sup>248</sup> “Exclusivity is a hallmark of a dying consciousness, a dead civilization” (Leonard 1972: 67).

<sup>249</sup> Matousek (2011: 14) refers to the role of elevation in human evolution by stating that “elevation - the emotion of being uplifted - explains a lot about why our species has thrived in spite of extreme destructiveness”.

reflective. [...] [A] global ethics needs to emerge [...] that strives toward consensus and still acknowledges human diversity in cultures” (Lombardo 2011b: 291)<sup>250</sup>.

The global is comprised of individuals, and thus each individual represents an important and necessary perspective. As far back as 1926, South African leader General Jan Smuts recognized that “[t]he individual is going to be universalised and the universal is going to be individualized, and thus from both directions the whole is going to be enriched” (cited in Ferguson 2011: 53). This, in Novak’s (2010: 5) terms, means that as performance educators we should strive to find a “collective vocation” that is a new shared vision for the future of performance that simultaneously makes sense of our past<sup>251</sup>.

This involves increasing our understanding of *how* and *why* we construct and shape frameworks and heuristics of viewing right and wrong. Ethics is an outcome of human evolution, most significantly the evolution of consciousness and awareness. Across a broad spectrum of research from science to the arts humanity is rapidly finding ways to explain and reveal how and why we have become ethical creatures and the role of ethics in our ongoing evolution. Throughout this narrative I have drawn on scientific discoveries (such as epigenetic evolution, mirror neurons, attachment theory, and neural plasticity) that in many ways illuminate and corroborate ancient as well as more recent philosophical positions regarding ethics.

The paradigm shift necessitates what Grotowski so succinctly, and in my view prophetically, captured in his words, which is the understanding, integrating and reconciling of paradox itself; a narrowing the gap between licence and limits, collectivism and individualism; the very mythic and historic essence of dramatic tension. Ours is a super complex world (Barnett 2000 in Sutherland 2007: 115), in which we are *creating the self* (Weber 2000) and *creating choice* (Iyengar 2011: 268), and much responsibility and accountability come with such a territory of transformation. Leonard (1972: 217) recognizes that “the transformation of humanity into a new species” is an even larger event than “[t]he death of Civilization”:

Recognizing that we are in the process of transforming ourselves into a higher species, we can focus our best efforts on this historic and all-absorbing goal. [...] No field of endeavour can long remain untouched. We may even look forward to a modern literature, *a drama and a cinema based not entirely on degradation, alienation and despair* (Leonard 1972: 217)<sup>252</sup>.

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<sup>250</sup> As cited previously in Chapter 4, section 4.2.2.

<sup>251</sup> “We will create a third ‘axial age’, in other words, when we create, in opposition to our various fantasized, defensive ‘axes of evil’, a humane *educational* axis of good will, pedagogically soliciting with all our hearts, with all our souls, and with all our might, a universal engagement of one another in communicative loving struggle with ourselves, with present and historical others, and, through that, with the whole of humanity. On that day, and only on that day, the human world shall be *humanly* one” (Novak 2010: 14). (Emphases in original).

<sup>252</sup> Emphasis added.

## 10.2 Future fishing expeditions in search of the ‘*why?*’

Barba (1988: 12) speaks of the visionary theatre reformers, who at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century “imploded” a culture of theatre that had been in existence for a century by reformulating their attitudes and re-inventing their identities. He mentions that they deliberately confronted themselves with “the four fundamental problems for an actor: not only *how* to be effective as a performer, but also *why*, *where*, and for *whom*”<sup>253</sup>. He describes these founders as the “ancestors” of contemporary theatre from whom we have inherited a “tradition”. But “‘tradition’ is ambiguous” he says, because although it is something historic we might casually accept at face value as heritage, it is also “the exercising of refusal. It is our retrospective look at the human beings, the craft, the very History that has preceded us and from which we choose to distance ourselves through the continuity of our work” (Barba 1988: 12).

Where art and theatre have historically depended on their innate mystery for their license and freedom (Schyberg and Carlson III 1962, Bates 1987, Frazetto 2012), this is no longer simply something that can be taken at face value. The implications of scientific explanations that serve a deeper understanding of our ethical foundations are co-incidentally (and perhaps not surprisingly at all) the very same biological and neuro-anatomical workings behind the ‘magic’ of the actor and the stage and screen (mirror neurons being a prime example) (Badt 2014, Frazetto 2012). The impact on both theatre and ethics of the relatively recent revelations of how the human being is able to transform, adapt and change from a psychological, biological, neuro-anatomical, cultural, sociological, emotional and physical point of view, cannot be ignored. In fact, it is because of our contemporary understandings that what were previously acceptable and unquestioned practices in theatre are now becoming suspect.

Psychohistorian Lloyd deMause observes that: “The most interesting question about any group, one which we are asked even as children - ‘Why are they doing that?’ - is rarely asked in academia” (2002: Chapter 5, web page). As an academic, and as an educator reviewing the ethics of performance education, it has become imperative that I do ask *why* the culture of performance and its education might condone, endorse and continue with questionable practices. The research methodologies I have drawn on throughout this enquiry emphasise the act of questioning and the process of going ever deeper as questions themselves may in turn be questioned. More significantly for the purposes of this study, however, has been the increasing recognition of the importance of asking why *I* so unquestioningly conformed to practices as a student, professional and educator that were potentially (in some instances obviously, and in the worst cases deliberately) degrading, shaming, abusive and lacking in empathy?

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<sup>253</sup> Emphasis in original.

deMause states that “the anthropologist’s central concept that ‘culture determines social behavior’ is simply a tautology”:

Since “culture” only means “the total pattern of human behavior” [...], to say “culture is what makes a group do such and such” is merely stating that a group’s behavior causes its behavior. Even if culture is restricted to “shared beliefs,” it is purely tautological to then speak of “cultural causation,” since all this could mean is “a group of individuals believe something because they all believe it.” Culture is *explanandum*, not *explanans* (deMause 2002: Chapter 5, webpage)<sup>254</sup>.

If, as Seton (2007: 2) suggests, within the habitus of performance and its education, certain questionable practices are deemed “‘natural’ or ‘normal’”, I must look to myself as a point of departure. Even though I have become increasingly critical of numerous practices and pedagogies over the last few years, and my teaching practice has become significantly more sensitive to the situations and orientations of the student-performer, I must acknowledge that it was not until embarking on this study that I had ever asked *why* the culture of performance and its education is constituted the way it is. To clarify: I have questioned its integrity, values and organisation, but I have not asked *why* it ascribes to these values or modes of organisation. In Chapter One I mentioned three speculative factors for why the emergence of applicable research and resultant change in ethical practice and investigation may be slow in coming within the culture of performance and its education. To recall, these were: an implicit attitude of “live and let live” in the performance industry that prevents performing artists from coming forward with their experiences of trauma or abuse (Brandfonbrener 1992: 101); performer training being likened to initiation into a “secret society” (Seton 2010: 9); a concomitant counter-culture of performance training, where the toughness of the trade calls for simply “getting over” resistances, implying a willingness to accept suffering as a necessary part of the preparation process (Seton 2004: 233). The issue then becomes: *why* does this implicit attitude of “live and let live” exist, *why* is the culture of performance like a “secret society”, and *why* does the toughness of the trade demand simply “getting over” resistances?

Determining right from wrong, or choosing one course of action over another, requires a thorough appreciation of the grounds from which and upon which to make a decision, as well as an appreciation of the grounds within which a questionable act took place. Understanding *why* someone did something is critical in terms of assessing whether a chosen action was ethically sound or unsound. *Why* looks to obvious conscious motivations, and seeks further to uncover what might be hidden or unconscious drives. It was particularly with regard to unconscious influences that my attention repeatedly turned: to better understand my experiences and past choices, to raise my personal consciousness, and provide the foundations upon which to improve my practice into the future. What don’t I know? And more importantly, *why* don’t I know it? Knowing, or at least trying to access more deeply, the *why* of normative practices and established values within the field of drama, theatre and performance

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<sup>254</sup> Emphases in original.

education, why the habitus of drama, theatre and performance education is arranged the way it is, and integrating the potential paradoxes and contradictions that are implicit in answering *why* - are lingering questions pointed to by my exploration of the ethical tensions of license and limits in drama, theatre and performance education.

#### 10.2.1 Questioning the historical momentum of performance education and culture: reappraising ends and means

The notion of ends and means is central to teleological<sup>255</sup> approaches to ethics; ideally the journey from where we are to where we want to be, what we want and how we achieve it, should be ethically sound and undertaken in a spirit of invoking or inflicting as little harm as possible. This is a consequentialist theory of ethics (Lombardo 2011a: 3): what actions lead to the most favourable results? In such a model deciding whether an action is acceptable or appropriate is often determined by the overall outcome or objective being aimed at, rather than immediate or short-term effects it might have. If the ends are considered a worthy justification of the means, then all manner of relatively 'minor' misdemeanours might be accepted as inevitable or as a price exacted for achievement. This is known as the "*double effect*"<sup>256</sup> and Matousek (2011: 130) describes it as a veritable "ethical mishmash" because justifications and the determining and attribution of what might be divergent and conflicting values can be extremely complex and complicated. As broad examples we might consider how peaceful religions or belief systems might resort to violence in order to assert their freedoms or convert others, or how those seeking equality may resort to terrorism to achieve their ends. In light of ethics in performance education, then, if the risk of harm is taken as a given and necessary requirement in the process of becoming a skilled performer, practices that place the student, educators and other stakeholders at risk might well be deemed - albeit somewhat paradoxically - valid and acceptable.

To compound things further, as Matousek says (2011: 133), there may be ethical differences of opinion regarding whether resulting harm was intentional or unanticipated. Generally speaking, in ascribing guilt society differentiates between actively seeking to cause harm, and harm that occurs as an unexpected by-product of actions undertaken; yet as philosopher Shelly Kagan explains: "Some

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<sup>255</sup> There are 3 types of normative ethical systems or theories: the Deontological, Teleological and Virtue Ethics positions. Kline (2008: 6) explains that the first two are "deontic", meaning action-based, because they are concerned with what a person actually does; thus means and ends. As Johnson (in Hogan 2004:13) puts it, the first is "concerned primarily with action and its rightness or wrongness" and the second with "the ends and goals of action and their goodness and badness". Kline explains that 'teleology' derives from the Greek '*telos*', meaning 'end' and '*logos*' meaning 'science'; thus teleological systems are "the science of ends" (2008: 15). The final category has been explored at some length in the course of this *Performed Narrative*; Virtue Ethics deals with the development of the highest human potential as an aspiration for individuals and all of humanity. Virtues might be described as character traits which, when pursued, embodied and integrated, purportedly create moral agents or intrinsically ethical people as a matter of course. Virtue Ethics - which can be traced back to Aristotle's theories (Lombardo 2011a, Haidt and Joseph 2006) - asks "what kind of person do I wish to be?"

<sup>256</sup> Emphasis in original.

forms of merely risking harm to another must be prohibited as well as actually causing harm” (in Matousek 2011: 133). For educators, a constant addressing of the complex and often tricky relationship between ends and means, intentions and outcomes, license and limits must thus be an ongoing responsibility, in order to avoid both deliberate harm and harm arising from oversights or omissions. It means becoming accountable too for allowing or condoning through ignorance, lack of diligence or inaction, harms that occur without directly or personally intending them.

Still, identifying what we want to achieve and how we might ethically achieve it, while important and necessary, does not inevitably involve a thorough investigation of *why* we seek that achievement to begin with, or *whether* the motivational intentions and desires are themselves appropriate, relevant or even necessary. Very often these motivations may be deeply buried in the personal and collective unconscious. *It is precisely here the true value of interrogating our motivations, desires and drives through a process of ethical self enquiry becomes apparent.* Can we be held accountable for allowing or condoning (through ignorance, lack of diligence or inaction) unethical behaviours resulting from unconsciousness? I must concede the possibility of answering ‘yes’ to this question, if it is because *we fail to remain perpetually engaged in a practice of raising our consciousness*; in other words, failing to ask ‘*why?*’ of everything we think, say and do. I would argue that conscientising one’s personal ethos through self-interview, the formulation of a *Narrative of Personal Ethics* (built on a deep and thorough recapitulation of past experience) as a starting point, and then an ongoing practice of ethical self enquiry as demonstrated by this *Performed Narrative* itself, may prove invaluable in this regard.

### 10.3 Not an end or a beginning – but a *becoming*

In *Professional Ethics In Teaching: The Training And Development Challenge* which focuses on pre-service training for educators, Carter (1998: 1) suggests that “[t]he delivery of training related to codes of conduct may be possible”, but adds that “[t]raining individuals to adhere to particular ethical principles when making decisions may not be possible”. He speaks of the effects of “professional socialisation” of educators, and the fact that “unequal power relationships” between educators “often results in strategic compliance and subjugation of individual ethical principles” (1998: 2).

The result is ethical behaviour based on compliance with externally imposed codes - manifested in bureaucratic dependency where responsibility for individual action is surrendered - rather than the development of each teacher’s ethical principles and the consequent development of independent critical analysis, judgement and ethical action (Carter 1998: 2).

In their review of approaches to complexity in organisational development and management, Browning and Boudès (2005: 37) emphasise the importance of focussing on individuals within collectives since self-organisational structures evince more diversity; the potential for solutions that



“have a life” to arise from “somewhere” in the system is increased. Self-organised solutions may thus evolve towards positions of prominence. In the context of this study I read ‘self-organised solutions’ as ‘autonomous moral agents’ with clearly articulated ethical orientations, and thus a focus on individuals would allow those who previously functioned on the margins to become role-models for others to emulate (2005: 37). It is here that sharing the outcomes of a process of ethical self enquiry in the form of artistic expressions/interpretations (in my particular case the *Parables*) and the ethical concerns they reflect/embody might impact collective consciousness. The value and credibility of subjective self-identified ethical concerns and considerations becomes apparent. Somewhere in a system of educators (such as a Drama Department) the solutions to ethical concerns may already exist - within its individuals. If individual experiences, perspectives, knowledge and opinions (framed as personal *resources* in Chapter One) regarding perceived ethical concerns are granted means and ways of being presented to the group, they may stand a chance of being recognised and acknowledged. Translation and interpretation of these concerns through artistic skills and talents (also *resources* that educators possess) may create enough of a distance for concerns to be ‘buffered’ and thus ‘handled’ in non-invasive and de-personalised ways. This may defuse frictions and reduce intimidation, while still granting the subjective self-identified concerns and considerations access to the centre of the discussion/dialogue; thus the centre of the ‘system’. This offers significant support for my aim to “*demonstrate the value of exploring, utilising and drawing on personal ‘resources’ in the context of approaching the discussion of ethical concerns in drama, theatre and performance education*”.

Freiman (2010) observes that servility and conformity can lead to unethical behaviour, which suggests that diverse inputs are requisite when dealing with complexity and ambiguity in organisations. Diverse exposure (by way of a pool of subjective self-identified ethical concerns and narratives - again personal *resources*) allows for new information to emerge and for information to be seen and approached from emergent/new/diverse perspectives. Echoing a similar sentiment, Carter suggests the need for a process of “reconciliation” between the principles that operate in the workplace and understandings held by individuals (1998: 2). He argues for the use of case studies (narratives) as a point of shared departure that might facilitate dialogue “about competing perspectives” and that might be used as a springboard to “promote group and individual reflection and the collective and individual reconsideration of value positions” (Carter 1998: 3). This supports the ethical self enquiry process demonstrated in this narrative in its entirety. Before reconciliation can take place, it stands to reason that individuals must first identify and clearly articulate their ethical ground. These observations offer firm support and broad context for this study’s aim: to “*foreground the value inherent in conscientising personal ethical value positions*”, a ‘personal ethos’ or in Barba’s terminology, a “personal tradition” (1988: 17).

In Carter’s view, the development of ethical codes, “professional ethics and the emergence of each individual’s commitment to ethical principles is a dynamic process - in contrast to the relatively

passive acceptance of mandated practices” (1998: 3). While we function on a daily basis according to an intuitively held code of personal best practice, we might not necessarily have conscientised it. As suggested in Chapter One<sup>257</sup>, to be confronted with the forceful or persuasive opinions of others (as individuals or a strong culture) without having one’s personal ethical orientations subsumed, requires a confidence that can only be borne from having confronted the self deeply enough to conscientise and embrace the ethical ground upon which one stands. Having played the role of ‘stand in’ for other educators in the course of this exploration I would argue that such confidence can be developed and enhanced by undertaking a process and practice of ethical self enquiry as described and demonstrated in this study.

Human potential visionary Marilyn Ferguson (2005: 55) speaks of “them” to reference a general tendency we have to relegate and delegate our responsibilities to institutions. ‘They’ or ‘them’ is a fantasy or illusion composed of individuals who are coping with greater or lesser traumas of their own conditioning and upbringing, individuals with hang-ups, neuroses and phobias. These individuals are themselves dealing with personal anger, pain, guilt, shame and doubt, and seeking resolution to conscious or unconscious desires and the fulfilment of dreams. Speaking of the impact of individuals on the shaping of society, culture and history, deMause observes: “That individuals might have their own complex internal motivations for the way they act in society - that they have emotions that affect their social behavior - has rarely been acknowledged” (2002: Chapter 5, web page)<sup>258</sup>. The individuals who habitually shape the collective culture of performance and its education, may not have (as I did not) necessarily asked *why* the culture or habitus itself is arranged the way it is - although I held expectations that ‘they’ had, or should have.

Again the limitations of habit discussed throughout this narrative come to the fore. We are “creatures of habit”, and habit allows us to establish “automatic behaviours” without which “we would have no time to reflect or create. We’d be too busy putting one foot in front of the other. Hierarchies of habits get us through the day” (Ferguson 2005: 56). This condition resonates strongly with an overall trend in education which Robinson (2001) describes as a vicious cycle:

Because of its nature, the vicious cycle is very difficult to see or grasp. There are so many ‘feedback loops, with each iteration of the cycle reinforcing the previous,’ it acts like a haze that covers what is there [...] it seems impossible to really get one’s hands around it sufficiently to get the traction to take definitive action [...] (in Adams 2011: 79).

In *Telling Tales Within School: Representing Human Suffering, Distress, and/or Violence in Post Secondary Acting Programs* (2012), Danielle Szlawieniec-Haw parallels this understanding directly

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<sup>257</sup> To review, see Section 1.6.2.

<sup>258</sup> “Only the recent disciplines of political psychology and psychohistory have begun to consider inner meanings and motivations as the focus of causation in social theory” (deMause 2002: Chapter 5, webpage).

with performance education and its relation to industry: “A loop is thus created where students are told that the instructor’s expectations are based on ‘what the industry is like’ and the industry is generally governed by people who have learned this structure from theatre school” (2012: 28). ‘They’ are perhaps simply continuing on a path beaten ahead of them without questioning its validity, integrity or the ethics involved, caught in a cycle of conditioning that is not only difficult to see or grasp, but that may ultimately be unconscious. Commenting on the groundbreaking ideas of Thomas Kuhn (1962) visionary consciousness educator and futurist Thomas Lombardo explains how this is possible:

When a new paradigm arises, both the language and the presumed facts of the discipline dramatically change. In fact [...], the new paradigm is incommensurable with the old paradigm. Followers of the old and the new paradigms cannot meaningfully communicate with each other. Further, given the deep change in thinking and perception in a “paradigm shift,” it is difficult to describe how the new paradigm is an improvement over the old paradigm, since there aren’t any points of common comparison. The new paradigm is judged in terms of new facts, which are different from the old facts that served as a foundation for the old paradigm (Lombardo 2011b: 65).

When it becomes apparent that things aren’t working, when warning signs and signals that practices may be destructive or potentially harmful rise to consciousness, investigating and understanding the *why*, or the need for a paradigm shift, becomes an ethical issue.

Referencing the ideas of complexity theorist Snowden (2000), Browning and Boudès (2005: 34) suggest that a focus on the individual within a collective structure or organisation “leads to a *learning* culture” rather than “a *training* culture of obedience”<sup>259</sup>, which resonates with Weick and Sutcliffe’s (2001) shared “preference for moving away from planning recipes toward a focus on individual mindfulness and anticipation”. As Carter (1998: 5) points out, duty approaches<sup>260</sup> to ethics in education are often favoured such that ethical conduct may be dominated by obligation and discipline versus being self-motivated. The ideal, he suggests “would have the individual *wanting* to engage in ethical conduct”<sup>261</sup>. The concept of ethics itself may hold negative associations in the minds of many; ethics may be tainted with notions of extreme limitation, denial of professional freedom, an expectation of having to be a ‘goody-two-shoes’. Such ideas and associations might impinge on the idea of having individuals “wanting” to engage with ethics. Here I believe resides an enormous responsibility we face as educators. Here is where our creative faculties really should come to the fore and where the metaphors of *serious play* and *morality as art* are perhaps most useful. Not simply as “rhetorical flourishes”, “replaceable ornaments” or “arresting comparisons”, but in keeping with the notion of metaphors being a literal mapping of parallels and correspondences between a “source” and “target” domain (Fesmire 1999: 540) they should be approached, applied and put to service directly: as

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<sup>259</sup> Emphases in original.

<sup>260</sup> Attributed to the work of Kant (Carter 2008: 5), duty approaches to ethics define best conduct in relation to lists of identified duties within a given context.

<sup>261</sup> Emphasis added.

*practices*. Discovering how we can encourage and inspire a desire to improve ethical conduct as an ongoing practice in ways that do not differ, or are not separate, from our artistic rigour and vigour is in my view critical. Ethics should thus be approached creatively, artistically and performatively.

“Acting”, suggests John Harrop (1992: 77), is less system and more process, and ultimately “what works”. Adhering to certain behaviours and practices in the desire to create a competent performer may appear to ‘work’ within the current paradigm. But if ‘what works’ can only be achieved to the detriment of the person, by which I mean the compromising of his or her emotional, physical, psychological, spiritual and ethical well-being due to the “psychological hazards” (Brandfonbrener 1992: 101) of various performance practices, then we need to redefine what ‘works’ means. I would suggest that ‘works’ requires *serious play*: risk, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity and impermanence, but all simultaneously engaged *with consciousness, empathy, compassion, mutual respect and shared dignity*. Such would be a creative, artistic and performative ethos.

Taken collectively these various elements of ‘works’ should become evolutionary imperatives to ensure dynamic, living and *real* engagement with ethical concerns that may assist us as students and educators to avoid stagnation, inurement, abuse and apathy that may stem from habit and familiarity. In Chapter Three, Brinkman referred to the work of Taylor (1989) in order to emphasise that morality is “real”, it is something we have to confront and deal with because “we need the kind of understanding of the world that can only be expressed in moral concepts” (2008: 410). ‘Works’ should be a constant navigation of the *real* ethical tensions between license and limits, good and bad, right and wrong; a learning to live with and *within* the constant tension of becoming our highest potential instead of settling for what is already known about ourselves, each other, and the art of performance and its education.

In his article *Culture or Cult: When does the disciplining of the actor become abuse?* (2007) Seton asks: “what criteria do we use to distinguish between what is regarded as legitimate or acceptable ‘culture’ of teaching and what may be judged to be cultic, marginal, unacceptable and destructive?” (2007: 2). Only by questioning deeply, by asking *why*, can that which is unconscious and habituated be raised to a sufficient level of consciousness where such criteria can be (re)formulated. And this must begin with the self. “We ourselves are the ‘they who would not let us do the right thing’” writes Ferguson (2005: 198): “‘Their’ traits are our own worst traits. Each of us can acknowledge our own hesitation, our closing down, our failure to speak up, our ‘waiting to see’”. As Karl Jaspers said in his address in Geneva after the Second World War:

[I]t is only on the ground of personal reality that I can join in the collective life of a whole that would remain imaginary otherwise - of the smallest community, or of the state, or of humankind [...]. The future lies in the presentness of each individual [...].

[T]he moral power of the seemingly infinitesimal individual is the sole substance and the real instrumentality of humanity's future (in Novak 2010: 255).

The quickening of ethics in contemporary times, suggests Mireia Aragay, is in large part attributable to the work of philosopher Emmanuel Levinas whose work is widely accepted as having a dramatic impact on western ethical philosophy in the aftermath of the holocaust (Aragay and Monforte 2014: 4-5). Aragay finds it strange that theatre studies has been slow in catching the “ethical wave” because Levinas’ conception of the Other is so well suited to the theatrical context (Aragay and Monforte 2014: 5, Ridout 2009, Rossiter 2011). Levinas’ philosophy offers the potential to approach theatre as “a model of performance as an ethical encounter, in which we come face to face with the other, in a recognition of our mutual vulnerability which encourages relationships based on openness, dialogue and respect for difference” (Ridout 2009: 54). For this to eventuate, a re-connection to empathy is necessary, and this requires cultivation of the empathic sensibility. Many of the practices employed in the process of ethical self enquiry described and demonstrated in this study have the potential to awaken and enhance empathy and thus stimulate conscience.

Seton speaks of the student and educator being caught in a reciprocal relationship of mutual creation and embodiment (2010). If as educators, we take *our* whole selves into account and acknowledge our own suppressed, repressed and dissociated feelings and experiences, and if from such place of honesty and self-acceptance - by which is inferred a place of “earned autonomy” (Siegel in Jacolev 2009: 25) - we engage in acts of mutual vulnerability with our students and colleagues by treating *them* as whole persons unto themselves, then we may well ‘encounter’ more ethically sound approaches to teaching and making theatre<sup>262</sup>.

The word *reciprocity* [...] carries a quality of relationship in which power differentials exist but aren't center stage. Being with the Other requires all our abilities, energy, imagination, and good will. It requires commitment. It requires acknowledgment of the real difficulties we will have. Mutual respect is not something we start with and must follow guidelines in order not to lose it - that is a fantasy of survival efforts; respect, like ethics, is a moment-by-moment work of generation (Carter 2009: 1495).

And this returns me to the emphasis on virtue based ethics as a means to ethical character development and autonomous moral agency, and ultimately a validation of the whole process of ethical self enquiry engaged in this study. If we are to facilitate change in our students through the act of education, then we too must be willing to change. Campbell (2010: 35) refers to Connolly's (1999) notion of an “ethos of critical responsiveness” with which I resonate strongly in this regard. “Such an ethos foregrounds the affective forces of ethical experience; it is an analytic which is less interested in forms of being - that is, *being* persuaded by, resistant to, rejecting and/or tolerant of difference - and more concerned with those visceral and moving encounters which initiate other possibilities for subjectivity

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<sup>262</sup> Revisit ethical consideration 35 in Chapter 7.

and intersubjectivity”<sup>263</sup>. This form of ethics is “an aesthetic response” described by Connolly (1999) as a “movement of *becoming*” (2010: 35)<sup>264</sup>.

The kind of knowledge that becomes solidarity, becomes a ‘being with’. In that context, the future is seen, not as inexorable, but as something that is constructed by people engaged together in life, in history. It’s the knowledge that sees history as possibility and not as already determined. The world is not finished. It is always in the process of becoming (Freire 1998 in Neelands 2009: 175).

The ethical self enquiry process (Trawling Phase 1) was, and this *Performed Narrative* as a *practice* is, a *becoming*; a shift in the paradigm of self and my relation to performance and its education. And at the core of this shift lies a progression from ‘what’ to ‘how’ to ‘why?’ To fully understand what we do and how it can best be done it becomes critical to decipher as accurately as possible *why* we are doing it in the first place, and for what greater purpose. A process of ethical self enquiry is, in my view, indispensable in this regard. My self-confrontational enquiry allowed me to express, purge, understand, complete, forgive and make peace with many issues I have struggled with for many years. It was a creative dialogue with my many I’s that allowed me to find more coherence and collaboration within myself, and thus prepares me to resonate more coherently when I attune to others (students and fellow educators alike). It was simultaneously humbling and empowering; it created a confidence through an inner revolution of self - it was *serious play*.

#### 10.4 Ethical self enquiry: managing the risk

To change from one paradigm to another is a risky business. Throughout this narrative I have mentioned being confronted at times with existential crises, fear, doubt, shame, guilt, uncertainty and dis-ease. Risk and uncertainty are something that the three strands of *performance*, *education* and *ethics* explored and woven together within this study share; and they share it with any process of self enquiry. Harrop (1992: 81-82) situates the willingness to take risks as central to the actor’s (performer’s) task which means “to go where the impulse leads, to expose and reveal the way in which experience works”. Conrad (2006: 449) suggests that teaching requires crisis and risk, an “encounter” with “the vulnerability or the explosiveness of a (explicit or implicit) critical and unpredictable dimension” for us to be able to say anything has been “truly taught”. “New knowledge” she explains, “must break through previous frames of reference and individuals’ points of identity and vulnerability to enable recipients to transform themselves” (2006: 449). Carter (1998: 4) describes teaching as “characterised by uncertainty” which in the context of education where the welfare of young people is at risk, “becomes unacceptable”.

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<sup>263</sup> Emphasis in original.

<sup>264</sup> Emphasis added.



In grappling with the issue of ethics in teaching the employer faces a dilemma in acknowledging the uncertainties surrounding the professional practices of teachers [...] and at the same time providing a framework for professional conduct that is acceptable to the community (1998: 4).

As explored in Chapter Six<sup>265</sup>, Rossiter (2011: 9) positioned a performative approach to ethics as “unsettling” and “deeply chaotic”, where “the potential for ‘discomfort and pain’ must be acknowledged and where the notion of safety is ambivalent, as safety in terms of ethicality may not mean emotional safety or comfort”. While the risk of causing harm in performance and its education has been identified as a key ethical consideration, it now becomes necessary to reflect on the fact that calling for the personal confrontation of ethical orientations and self-reflection equally holds a ‘dark’ or negative polarity that must be navigated with care and respect; in short - ethically.

Speaking of the value of crisis as a pedagogical approach and the potential it holds as a means to revealing truth, Conrad (2006: 450) refers to the work of Caruth (1995) who comments on the fact that “[a]lthough painful, survivors of trauma acknowledge the personal growth, understanding, and sense of connection gained from their experience”. But, asks Conrad (as I am ethically compelled also to do): “Do good intentions and positive outcomes justify causing pain?” Her reply is that “[a]lthough there may be indications of inherent risk, there is no way to foresee the emotional response any individual might have to any [...] encounter”, and that it is “the teacher/facilitator’s ethical responsibility to help create an environment of safety and trust in which personal disclosure and risk taking can occur and to attend to the emotional well-being of participants” (2006: 450). Although I encourage and promote an ethics of ‘virtuosity’ (self-motivated and managed personal accountability and responsibility, or autonomous moral agency) and thus a personally driven, rigorous and ongoing practice of ethical self enquiry, I acknowledge that such practice is riddled with discomfort and risk. As such I must concede the necessity of support and shared endeavour. While I am resolute that the ultimate onus resides with the self, we all need encouragement and guidance.

Even though we alone must confront our inner ‘demons’ and will ultimately have to integrate and heal the fragmentation of self on our own, having a compassionate and empathic supporter or “attuned caretaker”<sup>266</sup> is critical in such a process. Seton (2009: 55) situates the need for this kind of support and mentorship within performance training as an ethical necessity, where acting teachers should be educated in a “duty of care”<sup>267</sup>, and where reflective group work, mentoring, support and supervision

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<sup>265</sup> To review, see Section 6.2.2.

<sup>266</sup> I borrow this term from Marks-Tarlow (2010: 33) who describes the need for an “attuned caretaker” in the development of sound attachment. It is the attunement between a developing child and an attentive adult that is predictive of secure development of identity.

<sup>267</sup> The *care* approach to ethics challenges a purely rational, autonomous approach. Love, concern for the well-being of others, and kindness are the centrepiece of care ethics. This approach was championed by feminist thinker Carol Gilligan in 1975 in response to rational and detached decision making and the traditionally accepted view that fairness and justice - rules and regulations - are the most important aspects of ethical wisdom

might take place without “compromising the risk-taking and vulnerability inherent in acting”. This echoes the understanding offered by Conrad (2006: 450) (referring again to the work of Caruth 1995) who equally does not shy from crisis but suggests that when it does occur “we must pay reverence to it by attending to the truths that it reveals and use what we learn to work toward ending further suffering”.

Throughout this research process I was fortunate and privileged to have ongoing support from my wife and fellow educator Samantha Prigge<sup>268</sup>. On a daily basis her support assisted me with navigating the dis-ease involved in my process of ethical self enquiry. Our interaction became for me a benchmark and resource on which I can draw as a model of how such a process of attuned care-taking might work for other educators who may wish to undergo a similar process of self review, and how I might reciprocally play such role for others into the future. What must be stressed here with regard to the ‘seclusion’ and ‘immersion’ I employed throughout my *process* of ethical self enquiry<sup>269</sup> (Trawling Phase 1) is that this interaction was not centred on discussing or negotiating ethical positions regarding concerns in drama, theatre and performance education. The focus was instead on offering a context of support in which I could navigate the identification, articulation and evolution of my personal ethos, and perhaps most acutely to assist with managing the existential and ontological risks (‘character invasion’ and ‘residue’ effects) associated with ‘walking in another’s shoes’ during the process of *recapitulation* and the creation of the fictional *Parables*.

I recommend that educators who wish to undergo a process of ethical self enquiry, should do so with the support of a partner, mentor or colleague to assist with debriefing and counselling throughout the process. A willing and receptive ear is often all that is necessary, but someone with experience in self-enquiry, performance and performance education would be the ideal. The benefits of unrestrained and non-judgmental dialogue is something contributors (Seton 2009, Szlawieniec-Haw 2012) position as a necessity in the revisioning of ethically sound and non-abusive approaches to performance training, and a view I completely endorse.

This is relevant in particular to what I experienced as a pervading sense of negativity that seemed to dominate my process; I became increasingly mired in the ‘serious’, missing out almost completely on the ‘play’ largely because of a self-interpreted emphasis on identifying ethical failures versus successes. Lombardo (2011b: 230) observes that it is fairly common for those who study or teach about illness to suffer from “iatrogenic illness”, where the “individual becomes hyper-conscious, sensitive, and vigilant regarding the disorders being examined”. This may lead to a situation where one thinks one is afflicted with every illness one knows. I experienced much the same thing except in

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(Matousek 2011: 39). Care ethics fosters an emphasis on relationships and mutual respect versus punishment; in other words on what is right more than on what is wrong (Matousek 2011: 39).

<sup>268</sup> Dr. Samantha Prigge is a senior lecturer at Stellenbosch University Drama Department.

<sup>269</sup> To review, see Chapter 1, section 1.6.2.

relation to ethics, and found myself becoming hypercritical to the point where I felt that I was a decidedly ‘bad’ person and a ‘flawed’ educator, and everything about performance and its education was questionable and awry. I believe that working with an attuned caretaker was at times the only thing that kept me sane and prevented me from succumbing to total overwhelm. “In learning psychology”, explains Lombardo (2011b; 194), “one becomes more ‘enlightened’ about one’s own psychology, good and bad”. I would vouch that ethical self enquiry too engenders such a form of ‘enlightenment’. Sometimes we need someone else to assure us we aren’t crazy or ‘evil’ and working with someone who is equally engaged with undergoing, or has already undergone a personal and professional paradigm shift is critical in terms of the kind of support I would strongly recommend is needed.

### **10.5 Knotting the three threads of *performance, education and ethics*: the quest for self knowledge**

And now, just before the curtain finally falls on this *Performed Narrative*, a ‘catch’ that has plagued me throughout the practice of composing it rises up from the waters in the ‘great net’ I hereby cast over this *whole* fishing expedition. Now that this exploration draws to a close it is time to get “real”<sup>270</sup>, and to move beyond idealism and confront deep challenges. In response to the perceived need for sounder ethics in performance education my natural inclination was to turn inwards, and in doing so I have built a case for ethical self enquiry in answer. As this exploration has unfolded I have identified and shared both ‘good’ and ‘bad’ motivations for embarking on this investigation; but at root I had a *desire* to do so. In Chapter Four I explored at length the understanding that desire is something that lies beyond our conscious control; it cannot be fabricated<sup>271</sup>. Despite motivating to others the value of ethical self enquiry, without offering a desire that holds a greater emotional charge the very best intellectualisations will remain “feeble” (Irvine 2006: 76). “[T]he intellect cannot command the emotions to commit. Emotional commitment has a life of its own: it either happens or it doesn’t (Irvine 2006: 74)”. Without identifying memes that can “demonstrate that they have survival value in the new environment” (Watson 1995: 193) or paradigm, much of what I propose in this study may have little impact. As Carter (1998: 5) pointed out earlier in this chapter, instead of mandating ethical engagement the ideal would be to have educators (and students) *wanting* to engage with ethics - a view I endorse. But although I might encourage educators and students to embark on a process of ethical self enquiry and to take up an ongoing practice of ethical self enquiry, this would not necessarily make them *want* (desire) to do so. This cannot be mandated. And if it was, this entire venture would be rendered moot. So what desire might have sufficient emotional charge to nurture and encourage the potential I have experienced, demonstrated and can foresee for others? What desire

<sup>270</sup> Taylor in Brinkman 2008: 410. To review this understanding of morality as “real”, see Section 10.3 of this Chapter.

<sup>271</sup> To review, see Chapter 4, section 4.2.5.

might hold enough instrumental value or force to inspire educators to break free of historical momentums, and what desire might have a greater appeal for students than those of “ability, recognition and reward” (Seton 2007: 2) which may possibly be putting them at risk?

When I place my own experience alongside that of other ‘explorers’ this study has led me to, it appears that we *share* something; and I would describe this as a personal ‘paradigm shift’ in attitude and thinking. (As mentioned in Chapter One this shift marks a bifurcation point between those who have perceived the need for change and those who have not)<sup>272</sup>. What is shared is the awakening at some point of empathy for the ‘other’ (past and present students, and possibly the self as past student). A moment of conscience arises. Questioning ensues. For me this was a gradual process, while for others it may have been more pronounced. By way of example: for Seton (2010: 5) it was as a result of attending a rudimentary course in acting in which he was a participant-observer. For Brandfonbrener (1992) it was as a result of being exposed to the narratives of actors in the psycho-therapeutic context. Szlawieniec-Haw describes her ‘paradigm shift’ as follows:

Questions and concerns about representations first came to my attention through my own practice as an actor. After appearing in a number of productions that included violent narratives and/or scenes of suffering, I began to notice the possible impact of performing in these pieces. I became more anxious, was afraid to walk to my car alone at night, and even experienced nightmares linked to my characters’ narratives over the course of the productions. It took some time, however, before I realized that these experiences may have been linked with my work experiences; and, it took longer still before I was able to speak about this potential connection (2012: 2).

As lecturer in Drama and Acting at The University of Northampton, Cook began to offer ‘debriefing’ sessions to students because she became aware that they were struggling to disconnect from characters embodied during improvisations (in Seton 2009: 43-44). The ‘paradigm shift’ being discussed here, is clearly illustrated by the *Parable Cindy*<sup>273</sup>.

What these ‘paradigm shifts’ have in common is perturbation; a ‘shock to the system’ or recognition that something is ‘wrong’ or unethical; or at least that things could be ‘better’. Throughout this *Performed Narrative* I have emphasised, through offering observations by various commentators in concert with my own, how theatre may in fact be used to provide such ‘ethical encounters’ and that a process of ethical self enquiry (especially *recapitulation* and embodying the perspectives of characters in practices of artistic interpretation such as the fictionalising of past personal experience) may likewise foster empathy and awaken “responsibility-as-moral-conscience” (Rossiter 2011: 5)<sup>274</sup>. What

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<sup>272</sup> See Section 1.2.

<sup>273</sup> To review, see *Parable 16* in Chapter 7.

<sup>274</sup> This is not to say that educators or students are devoid of empathy for themselves or each other, but this discussion is clearly framed within the context of a ‘paradigm shift’ and as previously established, a new paradigm cannot be seen from an old paradigm. It implies a different way of perceiving, knowing, feeling and *being*.

desire might motivate deliberately willing such perturbation? What desire might motivate engagement in ethical self enquiry in the first place? This is the ‘catch’.

In his treatise on considering acting as epistemology within the context of education, Griggs (2001: 34) discusses commonalities between method acting approaches and narrative enquiry, and finds that a focus on what he refers to as “profound self knowledge” unites the two modes of investigation. This leads him to the “conviction that if we can experience first hand what makes both ourselves and our students ‘tick’, we can help them keep their ‘learning clocks’ wound” (2001: 34). Herein lies a vital clue to the ‘desire quandary’; and it brings me full circle to one of the impulses that motivated this study, namely my Master’s thesis (2010). In my thesis I established that something the *Toltec Teachings* and performance training share is a quest for self knowledge (2010: Chapter 3). It was precisely because of this focus on self-study in performance training that I found there to be dangers inherent in various practices and techniques<sup>275</sup>. In particular the ‘method acting approaches’ Griggs refers to are at centre of many of the ethical concerns identified by commentators such as Dieckman (1991), Brandfonbrener (1992), Geer (1993), Burgoyne (1999), Seton (2006, 2009, 2010) and Szlawieniec-Haw (2012). To play the other believably we must know the self, and in playing the other we come to more deeply know the self. Walsh-Bowers observes that “[t]heatre actors know how crucial it is to have easy access to and understanding of their own multiple selves when they attempt to re-create human experience artistically and build and then enact a character” (2006: 679), and that the “basic reality of the theatre world” is built on the understanding that “playwrights, directors and actors assume that human behaviour is grounded substantially in internal referents” (2006: 677). The quest for self-knowledge and identity are thus central to performance *and* its education, and it is precisely here that practices ironically become risky because potentials arise for conscious or unconscious ethical violations. In Chapter Four I wrote that:

[M]y experience has been such that the scrutiny of my personal desires and the opportunity to see myself more clearly reflected through the various practices I engaged (and even now in the words unfolding on the page as part of this *Performed Narrative*) has led to a greater acceptance of self, which reduces the need I feel for recognition from others. Standing for what we believe in may put us at risk and make us vulnerable, but it may also strengthen our ethical or moral character.

This implied a transcendence or a transmutation for me of the desires that drove me to performance and which subsequently made me vulnerable within the habitus of performance and its education; the desires for “ability, recognition and reward” (Seton 2007: 2). While I was not conscious of it at the time, part of my attraction to performance was a deep desire for self knowledge. In Chapter Four I said that “what I was really looking for, or what I desired above all else, was *myself*; I just never knew that an audience (spectators or educators) would never be able to give this to me”. In Chapter One I mentioned that this same quest for self-knowledge similarly drove my process of ethical self

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<sup>275</sup> To review, see Chapter 1, Section 1.1.

enquiry<sup>276</sup>. The quest for self-knowledge is an ethical endeavour because identity cannot be separated from ethical orientations: “[H]aving an identity means knowing where one stands with regards to important *questions*” (Brinkman 2008: 406)<sup>277</sup>. In Chapter Four Lombardo (2011a:18) promoted the importance in education in general on emphasising the quest for self-awareness and engaging in critical self-examination. The quest for identity and self-knowledge are thus shared by the three strands this *Performed Narrative* draws together, namely: *performance*, *education* and *ethics*.

If the quest for self-knowledge can somehow be foregrounded in performance and its education as an inherently *ethical* endeavour, it may be possible that ethical self enquiry in fact becomes a part of drama, theatre and performance education versus being an imposition from the outside. In terms of desire then: if beneath the surface of seeking to be a performer (and educator by extension) lies a desire to ‘know the self’, personally and/or as a means to improve performance; then perhaps this might serve as a bridge between those who have seen the need for change and those who have not. An ethical self enquiry process which is cast in this light may thus be positioned in a manner that is more appealing or ‘desirable’. Such an orientation might also serve to recast the value of being engaged in an ongoing *practice* of ethical self enquiry in a ‘desirable’ light. Performers are constantly engaged in self enquiry because it is central to the craft; so this may merely need to be framed as an *ethical* encounter, with the self and in relation to others. One which is, moreover, (serious) play and (moral) artistry. Such a proposal can ultimately only be tested in dialogue with other educators, and while this study prepares for and approaches such a moment, it explores no further.

Lombardo (2011a) and Sternberg endorse educating for ‘wisdom’, which means educating the ethical character of the whole person:

We need to teach students not only knowledge but also how to use that knowledge well, e.g., thinking wisely and encouraging students to develop their own values while understanding multiple points of view. Teaching for wisdom recognizes that there are certain values - honesty, sincerity, doing toward others as you would have them do toward you - that are shared the world over by the great ethical systems of many cultures (Sternberg 2002: 1-3).

A practice of ethical self enquiry is an ongoing search for identity and personal wisdom or ‘knowledge experienced’. It is “a quest, [...] a kind of craving to be rightly placed in relation to the good” (Brinkman 2008: 411)<sup>278</sup>. And I believe this quest for personal wisdom, for “profound self knowledge” (Griggs 2001: 34) as an inherently *ethical* endeavour, could *become* our pedagogical “collective vocation” (Novak 2010: 5) as drama, theatre and performance educators.

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<sup>276</sup> See Chapter 1, section 1.3 and section 1.4: point 2.

<sup>277</sup> Emphasis added. As cited previously in Chapter 4, section 4.2.1.

<sup>278</sup> As cited previously in Chapter 1, section 1.3.



If educators within a department share their respective processes of ethical self enquiry and enter into a mutual vulnerability *with* one another by playing the role of partners, mentors or ‘attuned caretakers’ *for* one another, and if they share their personal narratives and perspectives regarding ethical concerns (*resources*) using the natural sensitivities and sensibilities they possess (artistic skills and talents - *resources*) - I personally believe this would fast track the call for ethics. Author Lynn McTaggart (2011: 194) draws on the ideas of physicist David Bohm to suggest that dialogue creates “pools of common meaning” that allow for a new form of mind to “come into being”. A ‘paradigm shift’? Such dialogue and reciprocal *sharing* of self-knowledge (*resources*), and *caring* for/in the manner in which this self-knowledge is explored and expressed, may represent a significant step towards elevating personal ethics to a more collective or universal level within the habitus of performance and its education.

By intuitively turning inwards in answer to the need for sounder practices and behaviours in drama, theatre and performance education I now recognise that I was doing what all good performers might naturally do. I was intuitively following my performative sensibility. Performers look to themselves for the inner *resources* that can be brought to bear on a character, scene or situation. They ‘stand in’ the shoes of, and for others, and courageously explore territories of human experience in order to share them. They tell their stories directly or through the words of others to bring insight and healing to life’s ethical challenges and quandaries. They do so on behalf of the audience, the public, society: *humanity*. But what if they began to do so on behalf of each other also? What if educators began to step more consciously and conscientiously into the shoes of one another (their students, colleagues and industry peers)? Johnson (2012: 237) explains that empathy and perceptive skills are critical to the problem identification aspect of moral action: “If we understand how others might feel or react, we are more sensitive to potential negative effects of our choices and can better predict the likely outcomes of each option”. By stepping into each other’s shoes we might avoid “*ethical fading*”<sup>279</sup> in which “[t]he moral aspects of a decision fade into the background” because “we use euphemisms to disguise unethical behavior, numb our consciences through repeated misbehavior, blame others” or “claim that only we know the ‘truth’” (Johnson 2012: 237).

Through such “exposure” the “personal and the collective” might “converge” (Grotowski in Kumiega 1987: 132) and drama, theatre and performance education might make answer to the call for ethics from the ‘inside’ (deeply personal) and ‘outside’ (peers, department, institution, education in general, international trends) simultaneously. The performer’s personal desire for self-knowledge (whether this be privately for him/herself, or in order to become a more competent performer) could be harnessed in service of the collective. Again the memes of ‘martyrdom’ and ‘self-sacrifice’ mentioned in Chapter Four<sup>280</sup>, and ‘narcissism’ mentioned in Chapter Five<sup>281</sup>, make their presence felt in such a proposal.

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<sup>279</sup> Emphasis in original.

<sup>280</sup> To review, see Section 4.2.6.

But if approached consciously and collectively I believe the risk can be managed safely, and thus: *ethically*.

In closing, I would like to share Stanislavsky's vision of an ethical performer, as an aspiration to be reclaimed:

An actor must be steadfast in his ethical problems. He must be steadfast in his undivided and alert attention. He must be efficient in his work, and he must clearly understand that his work does not come to an end with the fall of the final curtain. He must bring high ideals and beauty into life. All these are questions that affect an actor's whole life. In man's inspirations and dreams of a better life the actor must introduce the will 'to be' and 'to become' the thing his contemporaries regard as an ideal (1967: 226-227).

The ~~end~~ - ~~beginning~~ - *becoming*

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<sup>281</sup> To review, see Section 5.2.1.

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## ADDENDUM 1: A Personal Ethics Questionnaire

In Chapter One I explained how the hypothetical ‘Memo’ I devised provided me with an initial creative prompt toward beginning my research process. I also asked ‘what if’ ‘The Memo’ included an attachment of tasks and exercises that would assist each staff member to arrive prepared in advance of discussion regarding ethical concerns in performance and its education. A description of the *recapitulation* process described in Chapter Two might be included in such an attachment, as might a prompt to write a *Narrative of Personal Ethics*. The additional ‘Improvisations’ I engaged as this study unfolded might also be employed. Below is an example of a questionnaire modelled on the *Personal Ethics Questionnaire* I myself used. Its purpose is to assist in stimulating and supporting the process of accessing memories and generating raw material from which ethical themes, concerns and considerations might be extracted through narrative review or analysis.

The questions are designed to extract history, opinions about various aspects of the habitus of performance and its education, and to assist with formulating and articulating a personal ethos. Using this process in conjunction with others such as journaling and *recapitulation* as a base, *fictionalised narratives* might then be created to elevate themes identified to a more general and less personal level for sharing/discussion purposes. The questions are not intended by any means to be followed as a rigid template. I would recommend that they be treated more as examples or suggestions, and that any person who engages with a process of ethical self enquiry devises questions based on their own desire to learn, investigate and interrogate their personal experience.

The questions are presented in first person to foster a sense of ownership of the process. In many cases the questions deliberately explore polarities (good/bad, right/wrong). While ethics is inevitably more complex than simple ‘black’ and ‘white’ delineations, I found it useful, especially as a point of departure, to tease out where my priorities most clearly resided.

The questions below are not the exact ones I used. What follows is an amended and improved version. As my research progressed beyond ‘Trawling’ phase 1 I discovered additional questions that might be useful for other educators and these have been included.

### 1.1 Personal Ethics Questionnaire

1. Why am I engaging in this process of ethical self enquiry?
2. Do I have a personal interest in ethics? If so, what is it?

3. What work have I done so far in my career regarding ethics? (What have I learnt and what have I implemented? What do I already know about applying ethics in my work?)
4. What do I anticipate this investigation of ethics will give me? What do I wish to achieve for myself?
5. What would I wish to share with, or give to others regarding ethics in general and specifically in the context of drama, theatre and performance education?
6. With regard to ethics, do I feel I personally and specifically *have* something to share with others that might have value? If so, what might this be?
7. What influences have shaped my personal ethical orientations?
8. How do I personally define right and wrong?
9. How do I personally define morals?
10. How do I personally define ethics?
11. How do I personally define conscience?
12. What values do I ascribe to or hold dear?
13. How would I delineate my ethical orientation, personal ethos or code of ethics? What aspects or elements does it consist of?
14. If ethics are culture and context (time and place) specific, and moreover ultimately personal, how would I personally describe the purpose or role of:
  - a. Art in general?
  - b. Theatre and the performing arts?
15. What would I say is the ethos (essence) of theatre and the performing arts?
16. What would I say is the 'areté' of theatre (what is 'good' theatre)?
17. What is the current 'culture' of the theatre world (including education and industry)? How would I describe this culture?
18. What memes (repeated and reinforced sayings, myths, legends, colloquialisms, metaphors) do I associate with this culture and which have become embedded in my psyche and discourse?
19. What memes do I habitually reinforce about performance and its education?
20. Do I believe there is a difference between the culture of the theatre world and the educational context of drama/performance at tertiary educational level? If so, what are the differences?

21. Why do I teach? (What motivates me? What are my intentions? What do I seek to get/achieve for myself from teaching?)
22. How has this evolved since I first began teaching?
23. How would I define my role as a teacher? (What is it I actually *do*? What archetypes come to mind to describe this role?)
24. How has this evolved since I first began teaching?
25. What do I personally aspire to be as a teacher? (How would I describe and define a 'good' - ethically sound and professionally competent - teacher?)
26. How would I describe and define a 'good' (areté) teacher, *specifically* of drama, theatre and performance?
27. What do I personally desire to avoid being as a teacher? (How would I describe and define a 'poor' teacher?)
28. How would I describe and define a 'poor' teacher, *specifically* of drama, theatre and performance?
29. How would I define a 'good' candidate for the study of drama, theatre and/or performance at tertiary level? What would I seek as criteria/defining attributes at departmental auditions?
30. How would I define a 'poor' candidate?
31. How would I define a 'good' performer?
32. How would I define a 'poor' performer?
33. How would I define a 'good' choreographer?
34. How would I define a 'poor' choreographer?
35. How would I define a 'good' director?
36. How would I define a 'poor' director?
37. How would I personally identify unsound, unsafe or ethically contentious practices? (intuitive feelings, emotions, deviance from prescribed codes, logical assumptions about right and wrong?)
38. How would I personally identify good or sound ethical practices?
39. Based on the answers furnished in this questionnaire, what ethically contentious or questionable behaviours, practices, events, issues and situations now come to mind?

40. What personal behaviours, actions and pedagogical strategies do I feel I may need to address in order to improve my ethical character and practice as an educator?
41. What is my personal vision regarding ethics in performance and its education?